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Engage!

## A Legacy of Empathy

We've all been there – teased in the school yard, bullied or been the bully, and felt like we don't belong.

Some write such experiences off as natural rites of childhood and adolescence, but with incidents of violence, anti-social behaviour and bullying rising in our schools, maybe it's time to reconsider the childhood experience.



**Roots of Empathy**

Mary Gordon has discovered that a solution to aggression and other anti-social behaviour lies within each child's natural sense of caring and compassion.

Roots of Empathy, the successful organization founded by Ms. Gordon, created a classroom experience that fosters empathy within children.

The program brings babies and students together in a symbiotic, loving environment that reduces aggression, and increases tolerance and emotional understanding in children.

Join us on November 28 as part of our ongoing Movements of Change tele-learning series to hear Mary Gordon share her vision of a society of compassionate and caring children who will pass on their legacy of empathy to their own children.



[Register for Changing the World Child by Child with Mary Gordon](#)

## Related Links:

- [Roots of Empathy website](#)
- [About Mary Gordon](#)

By: Louise Kearney

## Unfolding Patterns for Change

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People engaging with complex community initiatives must understand the need to consider interrelated issues.

A community interested in stemming the tide of homelessness needs to face a multitude of issues, including land use policies, mental health services and income security - to name a few.

To address this complexity, many communities are engaging in holistic, integrated and comprehensive approaches that are generating valuable patterns and techniques.

One of these emerging techniques is the Theory of Change. This framework for change is designed to help communities strategically clarify their path forward.

The ways communities choose to unfold a comprehensive agenda are also emerging.

The following steps help a community unfold a long term comprehensive response:

- Consider a variety of strategies.
- Focus on only a few strategies to build on over time.
- Pursue local energy and opportunities to make the most progress.

Our ability to face complex issues is improving, but the journey is dynamic and there is still a lot to learn.



[Read this full article](#)

## Related Links:

- [Comprehensive thinking & action](#)
- [Learning & change](#)
- [Thinking like a movement](#)

By: Mark Cabaj

## Come Out and Play

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There is no denying the importance of recreation in developing and sustaining a healthy community.

During an event sponsored by Opportunities Waterloo Region, Dr. Gina Brown and Dr. Troy Glover addressed this need for recreation while discussing, "Access to Recreation for All Youth: A Community Investment with Surprising Results!"

In this report, author Dr. Browne recognizes the increasing importance in leisure activities when developing youth, positive relationships and a sense of community.

After studying 765 parents and their 1,330 children over a five year period, Dr. Browne concludes that children who participated in recreation programs became more socially and academically competent than peers who did not participate. Her study also demonstrates the significant economic impact of community investment in recreation.

Not only does recreation help to develop and sustain a healthy community, it also saves on the cost of health and social services. What more incentive do we need to come out and play?



Read pages 1 to 8 for the full report in this issue of *Ideas that Matter*

## Related Links:

- [Opportunities Waterloo Region's Community Conversations Series](#)
- [About Opportunities Waterloo Region](#)
- [Vibrant Communities Waterloo](#)

By: Susan Eckerle Curwood

## Vibrant Communities Update

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**Montreal, QC** – Vivre Saint-Michel en santé has received the 2006 Award of Excellence from Villes et Villages en santé. Citizen engagement, multisectoral collaboration and the active role of the municipality were recognized as particular strengths of the group. Read the complete press release [here](#).

**Edmonton, AB** – Hear first-hand experiences of people who have received financial literacy training in “Changing Lives,” a video produced by the Edmonton Financial Literacy Society, and learn more about Vibrant Communities Edmonton’s financial literacy workshops, [here](#).

**BC’s Capital Region** – The Community Council is conducting a survey of businesses in BC’s Capital Region. The survey examines how best to support employers in hiring and retaining people who have struggled to enter the workforce due to barriers to employment. Employers in the region are asked to assist by completing a brief on-line survey [here](#).

## Learning to Engage

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One of the core skill sets required in collaborative leadership is the ability to lead community engagement.

Leading public participation can be difficult, but there are a number of valuable resources available online that consider the community engagement process.

One of the best models originates from Australia. Through a continuum of consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering, Australian researchers have developed a framework that begins with the power of information.

The Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment’s website is a valuable resource for examining this model. It includes case studies, tool kits, training resources, a step-by-step process guide and even a community of practice.

Continual learning is an important part of developing our ability to lead and engage.



Visit the Community Engagement section of the Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment website

**Related Links:**

- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Models & Processes of Community Engagement](#)

By: Rachel Veira-Gainer

## **Kids & Community**

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As a parent of a child in grade four, I am very aware of how important our actions as parents are and how they impact our children. After changing schools this year, my daughter and I have faced many challenges in discovering our place in our new school community.

In the *Children and Community* section, "Actions Parents Can Take to Helping Children Succeed in School" is very reaffirming. This resource suggests establishing a daily family routine and expressing realistic goals – two things I have incorporated into my family dynamic.

One of the greatest responsibilities parents face is developing their child's character. "21 Strategies to Help Your Child Develop a Good Character" highlights two activities that I have found crucial in developing my family: eating family meals together (without the TV) and planning family activities.

A parent's involvement in their child's life does not stop outside of the home. "50 Ways Parents Can Help Schools" suggests helpful ways to make the most of the school system for the benefit of our children.

Children are a precious part of our community. Focusing on our little ones will have a big affect on their future and the future of our communities.



Read Leisa's full article

#### Related Links:

- [Resources for Parents](#)
- [Is Community Important to Children?](#)
- [Kids Helping Their Communities](#)

By: Leisa Nichol

### Featured Resources

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**Leaving Poverty Behind** - Seven programs have been designed to give people the skills, the knowledge, the confidence and the support to change their lives and their circumstances. Learn more [here](#). [Source: HandsNet WebClipper]

**Testing the Effectiveness of Post-Prison Employment Programs** - Offering transitional jobs to ex-convicts - immediate, closely supervised work and help finding permanent employment - is a growing tactic in the effort to usher felons back into society, while curbing recidivism. The effectiveness of this approach is about to be tested scientifically for the first time. Read the NY Times article [here](#). [Source: NY Times]