



View Engage online at: <http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/newsletter/engage.htm>!

Engage!

## Five Million Opportunities

---

We asked you how you would use \$5 million to better your community. Your responses surprised and delighted us!

\$5 million dollars isn't a lot of money in this day and age, but your replies show that there are five million opportunities to use resources creatively to better our communities, including:

- Invest in current collaborative initiatives
- Create a micro-finance lending bank for individuals on low income to start their own businesses
- A "dream camp" for youth leaders complete with tools to help make their community dreams come true
- Provide scholarships with the proviso that the recipient must apply their skills back into their community in some way
- Create opportunities for retired persons to contribute their gifts and talents to support young families and the strengthening of the community
- Leverage funds to create a youth centre
- Reimburse the costs of participation for volunteers
- Create a fund to help low income people in emergency situations



[Read some of the responses we received!](#)

By: Louise Kearney

## Happy Holidays

---

There is something about this time of year that makes us reach out to others and connect on many levels.

Our sense of responsibility and desire to help people in need seems to heighten, bringing individuals and groups together for the greater good.

Many faith holidays are occurring this season, including Christmas, Hanukkah and Hajj.

People from around the world are coming together to celebrate Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights that commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Later this season, the Islamic community recognizes Hajj, one of the five pillars in Islam. The Hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca that ends with the Festival of Sacrifice, which is celebrated by Muslims.

Whether spending time with family, exchanging gifts or gathering to worship, holidays play an important role in bringing faith communities together, reminding individuals about the importance of place, spirit, belonging and connection.



[Engaging Faith Communities](#)

### Related Links:

- [Learn about different faiths in your community](#)
- [An interfaith calendar with primary sacred times for world religions](#)

By: Rachel Veira Gainer

## St. John's, NL Joins Vibrant Communities

---

We are pleased to welcome Vibrant St. John's as the newest member of the Pan-Canadian Learning Community!

Convened by the Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador, Vibrant Communities St. John's is bringing together a broad range of community, government and corporate partners along with individuals to discuss a more collaborative and comprehensive approach to reducing poverty in the province's capital region.

While the St. John's region is generally perceived as a region of prosperity within Newfoundland and Labrador, neighbourhood-level data now available through the provincial Community Accounts identifies several 'pockets' of severe levels of poverty.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has recently released a Poverty Reduction Action Plan, and Vibrant Communities St. John's provides an excellent community-led collaboration to compliment that government effort.

We are delighted to have St. John's as a member of Vibrant Communities, and look forward to learning more from and with our partners there in the months ahead.

 [Vibrant St. John's](#)

### Related Links:

- [Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Poverty Reduction Action Plan](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador's Community Accounts](#)

By: Peggy Matchim

## Vibrant Communities Update

---

**Calgary, AB** – Vibrant Communities Calgary is pleased to announce the launch of their new website. Check it out [here](#).

**Hamilton, ON** – A new program in Hamilton provides free home energy audits and energy savings products to recipients of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Assistance and residents of approved neighbourhoods. These residents will save approximately \$700/year on energy and another \$100/year on water. Learn more [here](#).

**Waterloo Region, ON** – Colene Allen is the first person to find a job through Waterloo Region's Social Purchasing Portal. Read the full story [here](#).

## Weblog, We All Blog

---

An online diary. A space for collaboration and learning. A way to keep in touch with family and friends. A political soapbox. A collection of website links. An electronic community. A "blog" or "weblog" can be any of these things, and more.

When blogging first began in the mid-1990s, it wasn't even on my radar. I slowly became aware of a few online diaries maintained by friends and some of the early political blogs. At that time, blog communication was primarily one-way. The author posted thoughts, insights, or stories, and readers either responded via e-mail or, sometimes, were able to post comments.

Blogging has quickly moved into the mainstream. Corporations maintain blogs to communicate with their customers, and news services use them to disseminate information. Today, many blogs allow multiple users posting capabilities.

Blogs have become a vehicle for two-way debate, conversation, and learning, and are one of the newest mechanisms for drawing people together in online communities.



Read Susan's personal essay on blogging [here](#).

### Related Links:

- Some Tamarack Bloggers:
  - [Paul Born](#)
  - [Anne Blayney](#)
  - [Susan Eckerle Curwood](#)
  - [Louise Kearney](#)
- [Create your own blog](#)

By: Susan Eckerle Curwood

## Songs that Made a Difference

---

"Throw your arms around the world at Christmastime!"

In 1984, Bob Geldof gathered a who's-who of British rock and pop artists to record "Do They Know It's Christmas" as a benefit for the famine in Ethiopia, and, boy, did he start something big.

It became the biggest-selling single in UK history up to that point, raising over £8 million.



The success of the single sparked a huge chain of other charity songs, including "We Are the World" by USA for Africa.

The charity singles led to massive charity concerts, including Live Aid (which raised over US\$100 million for famine relief) and 2005's Live 8 concerts.

While Live 8 focused on raising political awareness rather than funds, the public uptake of Live 8's principles led G8 leaders to pledge to double aid to Africa by the year 2010.



So, this holiday season, crank up the festive music and reflect on what a difference a song can make. Throw your arms around the world this Christmastime!

## Related Links:

- [The official Live 8 site](#)
- [A collaborative history of Band Aid and Live Aid from the BBC](#)
- [Are we the great generation?](#)

By: Anne Blayney

## Featured Resources

---

**Capitalizing on Convergence** - Non-profits and businesses are converging - in the value they create, the stakeholders they manage, the organizations they form and the financial instruments they use. The era of convergence is upon us. Do you know how to take advantage of it? Learn more [here](#).

**Community-Based Jobs Strategy** - Can communities create meaningful work that is an attractive alternative to Employment Insurance and welfare? A major Canadian study of a new, innovative program is showing it's possible. Learn more [here](#).