



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

## Engage!

### Vibrant and Growing

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Picture it - 2011. Every urban area in Canada is part of a thriving network of Vibrant Communities.

Poverty rates are lower and the quality of life for Canadians is higher than ever before.

People of all ethnicities, beliefs, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds are engaging to build caring, prosperous and stable communities.

We're picturing it. Vibrant Communities is reaching out to engage new partners in the pan-Canadian movement.


Over the next few years, we'll be bringing the number of Vibrant Communities up to 34 – one for every Census Metropolitan Area in Canada.

We'll be adding at least five new Trail Builders.

And, we're adding a new category of Associate Membership to allow interested rural and international communities to engage with us in learning and exchanging best practices.

Is your community committed to making a collaborative effort to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life?

Come – share in our vision!

 Email [Susan Eckerle Curwood](mailto:Susan.Eckerle@tamarackcommunity.ca) for more information on how you can be a part of Vibrant Communities.



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## Related Links:

- [About Vibrant Communities](#)
- [Vibrant Communities Community Updates](#)

By: Susan Eckerle Curwood

## Voices from the Street

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Homelessness can be the ultimate experience of disconnection – from community, resources, supports and virtually everything else that makes up ‘home.’

Toronto’s Voices from the Street helps counter this disconnection by providing training and support to people who have experienced homelessness.



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This 12-week program encourages participants to:

- Tell their stories and put a human face on homelessness.
- Take on leadership roles in their community.
- Earn an income and build successful experiences.

Voices from the Street works to support and train each participant, no matter their obstacles. But, the Program is built on the belief that the individual must decide to lift him or herself out of homelessness.

Now wrapping up its second year, Voices from the Street has achieved some impressive results, though the work is not without its challenges.

Still, the Program’s team – who have experienced homelessness themselves – remain confident that their program has much to offer to the people who come through its process and to the Toronto community as a whole.

 [Read the full story](#)

## Related Links:

- [About Voices from the Street](#)
- [Watch Voices from the Street participants](#) (*requires QuickTime*)

By: Anne Blayney

## Capable Ken

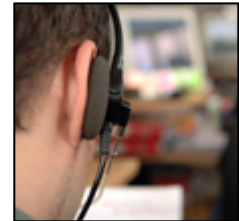
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On my recent trip to meet with Vibrant Communities colleagues, I met many wonderful people.

Ken, an articulate, considerate man in BC's Capital Region, finds himself in his fifties recently diagnosed with blindness.

He continues his involvement in his community as he seeks employment.

The government form that identifies Ken as someone "unable to work" is not only inaccurate but terribly insulting.



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Lidija Tomic

Ken is more than willing and able to engage in the work environment; the work environment must work with Ken as well.

Vibrant Communities are hot on the trail of learning about the factors that hinder full engagement of community members and impede our collective prosperity.

Out, out damn hindrances and in with collective wisdom and innovation!

Vibrant Communities' energy and innovation in Abbotsford, Surrey and BC's Capital Region has stimulated action and sparked substantial improvements in people's lives.

Through their dedication they have helped to reduce rather than alleviate poverty in the lives of 13,757 people in British Columbia.



[Read more about Kathleen's BC adventures below!](#)

## Related Links:

- [A Success Story in BC's Capital Region – Hiring People with Disabilities](#)
- [Disability doesn't hold back Glenda Watson Hyatt - read her blog](#)
- [Click here to nurture belonging](#)

By: Kathleen Kevany

## Vibrant Communities Updates

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**BC's Capital Region** – The Community Council held a panel discussion and open forum on the topic “Help Wanted: Expanding the Labour Pool” as part of their Annual General Meeting on September 10. Get the latest news from the Community Council by visiting their website [here](#).

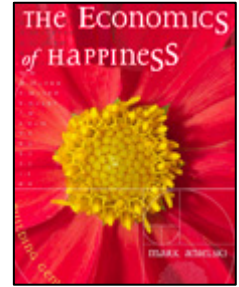
**Saint John, NB** – The Partners Assisting Local Schools (PALS) program began seven years ago and has expanded to include seven local schools. Learn more about how schools and corporations have teamed up to help Saint John's children become productive adults by clicking [here](#).

**Waterloo Region, ON** – The first installment in Opportunities Waterloo Region's 2007-08 Community Conversations series will take place on September 25. The focus will be on collaborative initiatives that are building the road to prosperity for everyone. Learn more [here](#).

## The Economics of Happiness

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We are increasingly aware that amassing material wealth is done at the expense of the environment, our spirituality and relationships with others, yet we are spinning our wheels ever faster in order to accumulate more goods, all the while wishing our lives could be more meaningful.



Mark Anielski believes we are at a critical tipping point and he shares his vision of Genuine Wealth in his book *The Economics of Happiness*.

We are at a crossroads and we need an economic model that measures wealth according to the old English definition of the “conditions of well-being.”

What if we measured progress by looking at health, our environmental footprint, affordable housing, community vitality and education?

Studies show that despite a rise in income and GDP over the decades, we are no happier. But, we still use these indices to measure our “growth.”

“Money,” as the song goes, “Can’t buy me love.” Neither can it buy happiness. So, let’s open a discussion about what will.

 [Explore Anielski’s notion of genuine wealth](#)

### Related Links:

- [Learn more about “Happiness Economics” at Wikipedia](#)
- [Get genuine wealth resources](#)

By: Judy McLeod

## A Lens on Life

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If you were granted one wish, what would it be?

Jehane Noujaim, gutsy filmmaker and 2006 TED prize winner, was granted one wish to change the world and she's using her passion for film to make a difference.

Jehane's wish is to bring the world together through the power of film.



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She is asking people around the world to create short films that provide a powerful glimpse into universal themes – the best of which will be featured on Pangea Day, May 10, 2008.

On this day, live sites in Brazil, Egypt, India, Israel, Rwanda and the U.S. will be videoconferenced to produce a four-hour program of film, visionary speakers and uplifting music that will broadcast live on the web, television, digital cinema and mobile phones.

The goal is to create a network of people and organizations that make a difference, facilitating community-building activities around the world.

A picture may say a thousand words, but film can unite the world.

 [Watch Jehane talk about her wish to unite the world](#)

### Related Links:

- [Visit the Pangea Day website for more info](#)
- [Pangea Day needs your videos](#)
- [Learn more about Jehane Noujaim](#)

By: Rachel Veira Gainer

## Featured Resources

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**The Promise of Employer-Focused Strategies** - While many skill-upgrade initiatives are based in the public or private education system, efforts where businesses sponsor or play a lead role in developing training also provide an important venue for skill building. This paper examines why employer-focused training is a promising strategy for boosting the earnings of low-income individuals while also providing benefits to employers. Three employer-focused models with potential for improving skills and promoting job advancement among low-wage workers are examined: incumbent worker training programs, sectoral training programs, and career ladder programs. Learn more [here](#).

**Place Matters: Employers, Low-Income Workers, & Regional Economic Development** - Spatial factors and location are often missed, but critical, pieces of the puzzle in developing public and private policies that support working families. This paper summarizes factors determining locational decisions of businesses and workers, as well as local economic growth, and suggests how employer needs as well as opportunities for low income workers might be served by successful policies in the areas of housing, transportation, education and workforce development. There are notable differences in the patterns of work and employment within and across metro areas, implying that there is no single strategy or national blueprint that will work everywhere. Learn more [here](#).