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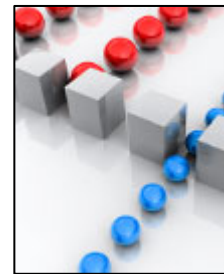
Engage!

Innovation Goes Local

How do we change the communities where we live?

Change does not necessarily mean fixing something that is broken. It may be creating new and improved way to address an issue to achieve better results. It may be about creating new and innovative ways to organize ourselves as organizations, to improve communication and cooperation.

The result could mean a new and exciting collaboration leading to community-wide outcomes.



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David Marchal

Al Etmanski, Frances Westley and the team at Social Innovation Generation have been pondering the question of social innovation. Tamarack has been considering the question of social change at the local level with this team.

The questions we are pursuing relate to the processes which change community systems.

We are particularly interested when groups of agencies from various sectors enter into sustained conversation about what is possible to improve conditions in their communities and then ask who cares about these new possibilities and how we might engage them.

Related Links:

- [Register for the upcoming tele-learning seminar, *The Six Elements of Successful Innovation*, with Al Etmanski and Vickie Cammack](#)
- [Vickie Cammack and Al Etmanski on *Thinking Like a Movement*](#)

By: Paul Born

What is Dialogue?

We talk a lot about how we might work better together. We take workshops, set rules and guidelines, and assess outcomes. However, we rarely talk about what we do 95% of the time we are together, which is engage in dialogue.



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David Bohme, a well known physicist, calls dialogue “the collective way of opening up judgments and assumptions.” [Joe Schaeffer](#) suggests that we “engage in another person’s meaning for awhile.”

When we open up our judgments and assumptions, we are able to move to another stage in conversation. Instead of convincing others that we are right, we have the opportunity to speak with others and build upon their ideas.

Suspending meaning can help us to be open to those whose ideas are very different from our own. Some of my university colleagues were military officers. As a pacifist, I had much to learn from them!



[Read the full article here](#)

Learn More:

- [Learn more about dialogue in Paul Born's recently published book *Community Conversations*](#)

By: Paul Born

News, Networks & Neighbourhoods

Vibrant Communities' convening organization, the [Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction](#) (HRPR) is home to more than 150 initiatives. The [Caledon Institute for Social Policy](#) recently profiled four in community snapshots:

Media Camp offered training to non-profit groups and gave them the opportunity to sit down with media representatives who could coach them on how to get more people-centred, community-focused stories published.

Participants were excited to come away with a process that is easily transferable to other communities.

Youth Arts Network was initiated to link youth to caring adults, introduce them to artists and involve them in artistic opportunities in the community. Young people found a voice, space – virtual and physical – and the chance to become involved in social issues.

Media Relations Summer Camp 2008



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In *McQuesten Neighbourhood* there was an initiative to focus attention on Oriole Crescent, which included playgrounds and gardens as well as more strategic measures such as redevelopment plans and employment strategies. This 90-day initiative is being followed by another 90 day plan.

North Hamilton Community Health Centre opened a satellite location in the Keith neighbourhood, creating a web of partnerships in under a year.

With inspiring initiatives like these, HRPR is really living its vision of “making Hamilton the best place to raise a child.”

Related Links:

- [More on Vibrant Communities Hamilton](#)
- [Hamilton's Media Camp: Quick, Fun and Powerful](#)
- [Hamilton Youth Arts Network: Voice, Space, Issues](#)
- [Hamilton's McQuesten Neighbourhood: What a Difference 90 Days Can Make](#)
- [North Hamilton Community Health Centre Reaches Out](#)

By: Brenda Doner

Vibrant Communities Updates

Edmonton - The new executive director of [Vibrant Communities Edmonton](#), Janice Melnychuk, will be part of the [2008 symposium](#) of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) in November. CHRA members toured another Vibrant Community, Vivre St. Michel en santé, in a [September event](#).

Saint John - [Vibrant Saint John's](#) Education to Employment initiative hosted a travelling job fair that bussed workers to businesses who were hiring. Neighbourhood development programs have expanded to five and have featured community barbeques in two of the neighbourhoods plus a series of community organizing workshops funded by Irving Oil.

Montreal - Several hundred children and adults participated in La Falla, an annual cultural extravaganza that included a parade and a 30 metre sculpture. [Vivre St. Michel en santé](#) welcomed two hundred people to their Grand Rendezvous in September to help set directions for the future.

Taking Community Health Seriously

Innovation & Wellness in Newfoundland

Recently I attended a conference sponsored by Avalon East, a unique collective formed by the health promotion division of Eastern Health Authority and Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition.



©<http://www.wellnesscoalition-avaloneast.ca/index.php>

Exciting incentives are being launched by Avalon East in an effort to build community and improve the health of its citizens.

People from all sectors are coming together, working as equals in order to improve economic conditions in small towns, reduce poverty in the city, re-energize social programs, reduce crime by providing mediation services, and revitalizing a troubled neighbourhood.



Visit the Wellness Coalition Avalon East website

Related Links:

- [Browse Tamarack's Health section](#)

By: Paul Born

New Staff at Tamarack

Being around Ron Petker you sense it immediately. He's a connector: a deep listener with a quiet mind and a heartfelt trust in people's capacities to find their way.

Paul Born had done some work with Ron for the Salama SHIELD Foundation and subsequently invited him to join our team. "I know (Paul) as a dynamic leader and a force in the community" says Ron.



<http://www.salamashield.org/>

As an educator and counselor it is Ron's intention in his new role to bring caring and support to relationships as they develop and grow through Tamarack's Learning Events.

With a background that includes both writing and counseling in the non-profit sector, Nancy Leach Schaeffer brings a useful skill-set to Tamarack's on-line learning and development of learning communities.

"Members of the extended Tamarack community are creating real change in how we engage with some of the most compelling issues we face at this time" she says. "It's exciting to step into an organization that has already made such a palpable difference in people's lives and to be a part of supporting initiatives to come."



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Ron and Nancy joined Tamarack at the beginning of October.

Related Links:

- [Read more about Tamarack staff](#)

Featured Resources

A Case for Social Innovation - Social entrepreneurship and social enterprise have become popular rallying points for those trying to improve the world. These two notions are positive ones, but neither is adequate. We contend that social innovation is the best construct for understanding – and producing – lasting social change. [Read the full article here.](#) (about 5 pages)

Social Justice: A Matter of Life and Death - *“A girl born today can expect to live for more than 80 years if she is born in some countries – but less than 45 years if she is born in others.”* Social justice is a matter of life and death. It affects the way people live, their consequent chance of illness, and their risk of premature death. Read *Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health*, a final report from the World Health Organization’s Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. [Access the full report here.](#) (a 247 page report)