



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

Engage!

Get Ready to Fall Back into Learning

You may not be returning to school anytime soon, but we're gearing up to learn with you this Fall at Tamarack.

This summer we've been as busy as bees preparing the Fall learning agenda.

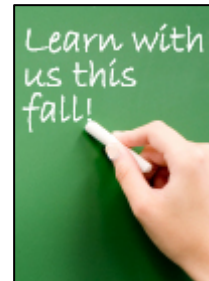
It all starts mid-September with the Communities Collaborating Institute, which brings together community practitioners from across Canada to learn about complex collaborative processes.

We've experienced the benefits of this collaborative learning event since our first Institute in 2006, and we're excited to kick off the Fall by connecting with others who are working to improve communities across the country.

September will also see the launch of our two new books – *Community Conversations* and *Creating Vibrant Communities*! These are must haves for anyone interested in innovated approaches to community building.

We will continue engaging with you in our Practical Visionaries seminar series, exploring novel ideas such as artful leadership, elements of successful innovation and storytelling. We're even launching a new online community to bring you a more engaging learning experience.

It all starts this September. You don't want to miss it!



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 Sign up for our next seminar!

Learn More:

- [Hot off the Press – Tamarack Publications](#)

By: Rachel Gainer

Kiwi Inspiration

Our friends in New Zealand never cease to inspire us with their approach to collaborative community-led development.

We were first amazed and energized by New Zealand's community spirit at the inaugural Communities Collaborating Institute, where they shared their touching community stories, hope for change, and rich historical and cultural experience.



INSPIRING 

www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz/index.html

All across Aotearoa New Zealand, people are working to resolve complex community issues. Together, they're working locally to address issues such as violence, crime, job creation and climate change.

Most recently, they've formed the Inspiring Communities Network – a nationwide group of communities that is committed to a new way of doing things.

The Inspiring Communities Network seeks to bring together the skills and resources that already exist within their community.

Their definition of community includes local residents, business, community and Maori organizations, central and local government, and funders, and believes each voice from the community needs to come together to achieve change.

We look forward to continuing to learn with our Kiwi friends as we welcome three more participants from New Zealand at this year's Communities Collaborating Institute.

 Visit the Inspiring Communities Network online

Learn More:

- [About the Inspiring Communities Network](#)
- [Mark Cabaj's journey to the Land of Big Ideas](#)

By: Rachel Gainer

Text for Change

On May 3, 2008 a group of young people from Hamilton met up at the bus terminal at their local mall and began to talk to people about poverty.

The group, known as Hamilton Youth Voice Against Poverty, and supported by the Hamilton Community Foundation, engages youth in discussion and solutions to reduce poverty and takes direct action or find those who can.

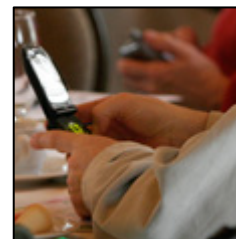


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Chris Schmidt

Why engage others in this conversation? HYVAP describes it this way:

"Because we are tired of poverty. Because we think everyone can do something about it."

At the bus shelters youth engaged about 60 people in a conversation or asked them to write down their messages about poverty in Hamilton.



Initially, there was an intention to forward the poverty messages recorded on the bus cards to youth friends via cellular phones – hence the name of the event: "Text for Change".

Though that didn't happen at the bus terminal, the HYVAP's idea was shared at Hamilton's report to the community on June 5th, where everyone at the gathering took out their cell phones to text anti-poverty messages to five other people.

That day, HYVAP demonstrated that something *can* be done about poverty in Hamilton.

 [Read HYVAP's Text for Change report.](#)

Related Links:

- [Check out the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction's report to the community](#)
- [Visit the HRPR website](#)
- [Learn more about HRPR's involvement with Vibrant Communities](#)

By: Louise Kearney

Vibrant Communities Updates

Edmonton, AB – The Government of Alberta has announced that Albertans receiving assistance through the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program can now earn more money and still remain eligible for financial assistance. Learn more [here](#) and learn more about Calgary's AISH initiative [here](#).

Toronto, ON - Register now for an exciting conference! *Time for Action: Tackling energy poverty in Canada through energy efficiency*, will examine energy efficiency as a way to relieve the burden of rising energy costs for Canada's low-income households. The conference runs 29 September-1 October 2008. Early bird rates available are until 29 August. More details and registration [here](#).

Waterloo, ON – Wilfrid Laurier University's new Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action has made a commitment to continue the research-based, community partnered relationship established with Opportunities Waterloo Region, through its Poverty Policy Project. This will be one of the main initial community research projects of the centre, expected to continue for several years. Learn more about CCRLA on page six of this Laurier newsletter [here](#).

Design for Evolution

We regularly receive calls and emails from our colleagues across the country. They know *what* we do, but they want to know *how* we do it – our e-magazine, tele-learning seminars and online presence.

The truth is we've learned by doing, by making mistakes and by identifying what works (and what doesn't) for the moment.



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Tamarack was established in 2001 to find a “technology” to develop and support citizens and institutions when solving major community challenges. We turned to theWeb to help us establish a national presence, one that could be accessible to communities across Canada.

Our initial online attempts were valuable learning experiences. We had to learn quickly and, more importantly, we had to design for evolution.

What we know so far:

- Know your users and design for them
- Relationships are important – value user feedback
- Push the envelope and be on the lookout for advances in technology and learning
- Build learning and knowledge development into your processes

In a recent article, Louise Kearney shares with us some of the lessons we've learned when using online communication to give life to community engagement.

 [Read Louise's article in Sparc BC News](#)

Learn More:

- [What is Learning 2.0?](#)
- [Engage in Tamarack's online seminars](#)

By: Rachel Gainer

Creating a Student Culture

I am a summer student at Tamarack and have been in charge of the growth of Tamarack's presence through Facebook, while also exploring other social media to improve our online community. Jenna Benson, another summer student has been working to keep the database of our community active, and Susan Mwangi provides a variety of support for Vibrant Communities.



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Jacob Wackerhausen

Along with these responsibilities, we have been asked to create a guide for future students working at Tamarack. Together, we discuss our experience of working here and explore how Tamarack can foster a student culture.

We've concluded that a positive student culture is best realized when the students not only gain valuable experience, but also contribute to the growth of the organization. By having the freedom to share their ideas and knowledge openly, an organization can learn valuable lessons from its students.

My goal now is to make a meaningful impact for Tamarack. I challenge any student to do the same for their organization.



[Check out the work Michael's done on the Tamarack page on Facebook!](#)

By: Michael Domingo

Featured Resources

Collaboration Key to Success in Knowledge Economy - A study of Canada's biotech industry suggests that what makes a particular location a hive of cutting-edge invention are companies that actively collaborate, and have strong ties to universities, often by being university spin-off businesses. Download the full study [here](#). [Source: HandsNet WebClipper]

Increasing the Power of Community Activists - A report from the UK government provides useful recommendations for both government and community activists. *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power*, attempts to give power back to communities by suggesting, for instance, that there should be an "obligation to respond" to public petitions. Many of the recommendations are useful to community builders in any country. Download the paper [here](#). [Source: Charity Village]