



Engage!

Communities Engaged

Across Canada, citizens are taking action on issues that matter to them - and their community.

Tamarackcommunity.ca aims to inspire, promote and help these citizens by becoming the online home for community engagement in Canada.



Welcome to Tamarack's new and improved website!

We hope you like the new look and feel of the site and will spend some time exploring the content.

Let us know what you think of the site by emailing [Louise](#).

Access to the old website will be available for a short time [HERE](#).

Building vibrant communities ... by reclaiming our humanity

Imagine a country in which caring for and about people is a priority.



Sherri Torjman, Vice President of the [Caledon Institute of Social Policy](#) tells us how we can reclaim our humanity by creating vibrant communities. Vibrant communities are those that provide support, promote inclusion and encourage learning.

At a recent presentation, Sherri provided the context for vibrant communities - a description of where we stand and how we got here - and articulated a vision for the future and for our communities that recognizes our values and human rights.

More... read [Reclaiming Our Humanity](#) online.

Related Links:

- [Video clips from Sherri's presentation](#)
- [The Caledon Institute of Social Policy website](#)

Cape Breton's New Vision

At Vibrant Communities' second face-to-face forum in September 2003, Rankin MacSween and the Cape Breton delegation vowed to engage their community in a conversation about a vision for Cape Breton.

And they've done it.

After discussions involving hundreds of people from the Cape Breton community -- business, education, government, youth, volunteers -- a bold vision and mission have been created.

The vision for Cape Breton: A self-reliant people in a vibrant community.



The mission: To engage the community to create and support the development of a culture of self-reliance.

Related Links:

- [The outcome challenge](#)
- [Cape Breton in Vibrant Communities](#)

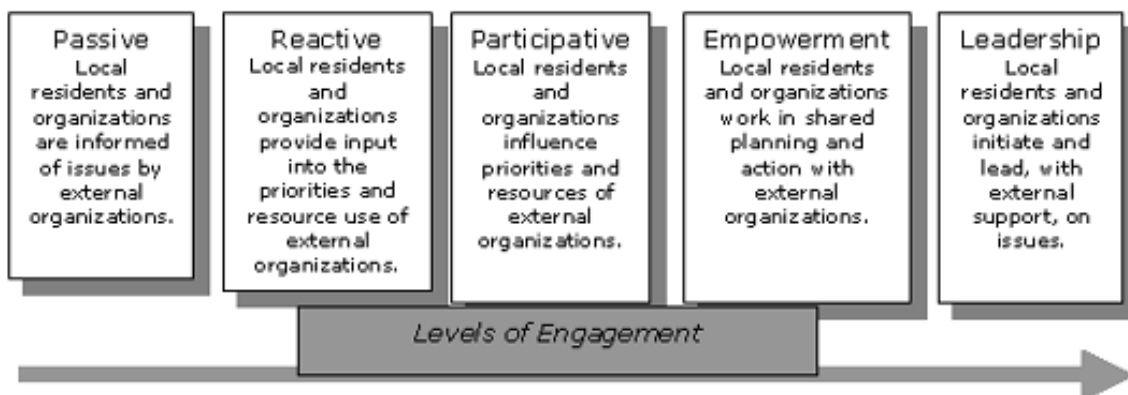
The Promise of Community Engagement

Communities who work together towards common goals reap many benefits.

Research suggests a link between high levels of civic participation and a community's overall quality of life. Communities whose citizens collaborate closely experience increased educational achievement and childhood development. Their neighbourhoods are safer and more productive. They experience greater economic prosperity, and their citizens have increased physical and mental health.

Community engagement is not a panacea for the complex, often controversial, issues facing Canadians. Many of the root causes of social, economic and environmental challenges lie outside of community control. At the same time, communities need the skills, resources, knowledge, enthusiasm and patience of engaged citizens if they are to make headway in maintaining and strengthening the quality of life for all.

As community engagement increases, citizens move from being passive to taking active leadership roles, as can be seen in the continuum below. As leaders, citizens can have a powerful influence and effect on the life of their communities.



Adapted From: Hashagen 2002 and Sydney Department of Planning 2003.

Related Links:

- [More on Community Engagement](#)
- [Download our research study on Community Engagement](#)

Joe Schaeffer means what he says

Musician, actor, anthropologist, teacher. Joe Schaeffer has played each of these roles in his life.

Joe Schaeffer is an author, speaker, consultant, and facilitator. His work focuses on community, communication, decision-making, and the management of conflict. It rests on his belief that we can be truly humane, cooperative and creative with each other as we work through the difficult challenges of our times.



Joe's work is an important influence at Tamarack. He offers a unique point of view about ways to build community and practical approaches in communication and the management of conflict that make it possible for us to break through bad habits and divisive attitudes and find joy in diversity. We can experience difference without difference becoming a barrier to creativity. We can respect difference in the spirit of community.

Joe has taught and studied human communication in many settings. Joe recognizes that humans are unique, diverse, complex, creative creatures with a potential to experience meaning deeply within and with each other in what he calls meaning-based or creative communication.

Many people who have worked with Joe talk about fundamental changes they experience in ways of seeing things and ways of living with others.

They become storytellers and witnesses as they make and share meaning. They choose to value community and partnership rather than domination and control.

By embracing new and more holistic approaches to communication and conflict management, like Joe's model for creative communication, community leaders can encourage growth and healing and promote the spirit of community.

Related Links:

- [More on Joe](#)
- [Visit Joe's section on our site](#)