

In this Newsletter you'll find...

Inspiring Communities and Core Learning Cluster News: Highlights from the International Community Development Conference, Portugal; Courageous stories from Porirua of journeys out of debt; Resources now online from Lunchbox to Toolkit forums; and an update on Aquaculture and Opotiki.

Community-Led and Community Driven: 2011 Dynamic Community Learning Awards seeking entries; The Inspiring Stories Film Competition seeks local story makers.

Learning Links: Learning from the US including the 'Hackathon' approach to stimulating urban innovation; free e-books on Urban Connectivity and a closer look at the US Digital Divide; and discovering community resilience in Detroit.

News You Can Use: Connecting with neighbours and four other Ways to Wellbeing; Random Acts of Kindness Day this week.

Events: Partnering for Results workshop; How Communities Heal online series; Social Entrepreneurs Fellowships Auckland 'masterclass'; and Creating Transformative Change workshop.

Editorial

Nga mihi mahana!

All around Aotearoa, as we recover from extreme weather events and welcome the change to a warmer season, it's been a spring-like period for community-led development!

Recent events and conversations have seen a 'growth spurt' in shared understanding among many sectors that locally is where we are most likely to create sustainable solutions to some of the complex issues our country and communities are facing. And we are also sensing growing recognition about the time and perseverance that is required.

We are hopeful that as part of the lead up to the national elections we will hear serious commitments to supporting and resourcing long term locally-led, cross-sectoral work. Short term strategies, and simple solutions cannot 'fix' complex issues which have taken decades to develop.

Local communities such as Victory, Opotiki, Porirua and many others are getting together and having a go at finding their own solutions, and gathering energy around them to help. We believe it makes good sense to invest in these local innovations, to seek to add value to their determination to 'move the needle' on the issues they are facing.

Effectively these communities and initiatives are the 'research and development arm' of New Zealand Inc; they are best positioned to make progress on the difficult issues which purely central government driven solutions are ill-equipped to make a lasting impact on. As Mark Cabaj, on his recent visit to NZ said, "in the corporate world when we don't know the solution, we invest heavily in research and development and we go like crazy to try and to learn about what works ... we expect to invest in a huge range of approaches led by different thinkers and entities."

People from all walks of life and from many different sectors are doing this now. We are seeing it in small rural communities and in suburbs and neighbourhoods of large cities. As well, at regional and national levels, many funders, philanthropists and corporates are making shifts to align their policies and practices alongside community-led

approaches. There is also evidence of growing local and central government interest.

The many stories we heard at the [Victory Village Forum](#) held in Nelson in July exemplified our belief that local communities are both the needle and the gauge. They are a rich source of the innovation and solutions our nation is seeking. At Victory, the school is the hub for the local community and this is one example of innovation that over a number of years has moved the needle on many aspects of wellbeing.

Victory is not alone in this concept. The potential for collaboration between learning hubs, families and whanau and local communities was the focus of our co-hosted June [Lunchbox to Toolkit forum](#) in Auckland.

Two hundred and fifty people came to the Victory Village Forum and we've been delighted at their feedback. There is keen interest for further local and regional discussions, and in sharing the insights with central government policy makers and key community funders. We will keep you posted! Speeches and presentations are being uploaded to the Victory Village Forum website as they become available and the full Forum Report will be published shortly.

In the meantime, we'll leave you with one of the many memorable quotes from the Forum . It is a practical touchstone in the face of some of the systems changes needed, and was shared during a Plenary Panel presentation at the Forum by Di Grennell, Director Operations, Te Puni Kokiri: "Small things, lovingly done, are always within our reach". *

Ka kite ano

Leigh Strange and Barbara MacLennan on behalf of the Inspiring Communities Development Team

STOP PRESS:

Our Chairperson David Hanna is delighted to announce the appointment of Ian Leader as Inspiring Communities National Manager. Ian comes to us with extensive experience and networks in corporate, academic, local government and philanthropic sectors. He will start work with us in mid September.

(* From *Blessed Unrest* by Paul Hawken)

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES & CORE LEARNING CLUSTER NEWS

Highlights from the International Community Development Conference, Portugal

What do Rosa Parks (who in 1955 refused to obey a bus driver's order that she give up her seat for a white passenger), community gardens in the mid United States and a UK framework called "Voice" have in common? They all demonstrate how practically any opportunity can be taken to strengthen or build community leadership - especially starting 'where people are at' and using those skills, interests and resources as the basis for development.

Transformational leadership in communities was the focus of the International Community Development Conference in Portugal in July 2011, attended by people from Portugal, India, England, the USA, South Africa, Uganda, Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland and Canada, among others.

Inspiring Communities board member Mary-Jane Rivers presented an elective workshop on 'leaderful communities'. We were delighted that it turned out to be one of the most popular of the conference, with the majority of delegates attending.

Noticing how community leadership can come from any corner as long as it is intentionally supported was a

consistent theme of the conference.

[Read the full article.](#)

Courageous stories of journeys out of debt

Last month a series of stories appeared in the Kapi-Mana News, Porirua's local newspaper. These stories created with help from Good Cents Porirua and Porirua City Council, profile local people, their courage, and tell how they have changed the cycles of debt in their own lives.

We think these stories, and the fact they are being shared publicly, is a fantastic development. [Click to check them out.](#)

Report and presentations from June Lunchbox to Toolkit workshop now online

If we believe it takes a village to raise a child, what does this mean for relationships and collaboration between learning hubs and local communities? This powerful question was the gathering call for the “Lunchbox to Toolkit” forum held at the Onehunga Community Centre in June.

The purposes of the one-day forum were to:

- build relationships between those working in the ‘family centred, community-led development’ space
- share ideas, experiences and practice
- explore what else could be done to strengthen a family centred, community-led approach in Tamaki Makaurau.

[The presentations and a summary are now available online to view and download.](#)

Aquaculture and Opotiki - the future's looking bright

The forward looking vision of Whakatohea Iwi and Opotiki people was celebrated and acknowledged at an August public event co-hosted by Whakatohea Maori Trust Board and Opotiki District Council. Seventy-five people packed the Council Chambers to hear about positive progress towards a viable local aquaculture industry for the District.

Trials to grow mussels eight kilometres off the Opotiki Coast are producing high levels of local spat (young shellfish) and great quality unique mussels – and they are growing at a rate more than double what was anticipated. This is great news, and the meeting was informed that current business plans estimate the need for 228 positions to operate the core business within five years of starting, rising to 547 by year twelve. These estimates do not include all of the additional jobs which will be necessary to support the industry.

[Read the full article in the Core Learning Cluster section.](#)

COMMUNITY LED & DRIVEN

Dynamic Community Learning Awards

Adult & Community Education Aotearoa (ACE Aotearoa), the McCombs-Rivers Family and Alison Broad are delighted to announce the seventh year of awards to recognise and celebrate Community Learning. The awards celebrate the stories of education programmes that help strengthen communities.

The two Dynamic Community Learning Awards carry cash prizes of \$200.

[Click to read full details and download the Entry Form.](#)

The Inspiring Stories Film Competition - Call for Entries

Do you have an inspiring story to tell? Could you make a film about young Kiwis doing great stuff – making a difference in their community?

Inspiring Stories invites filmmakers of any age to make a short film and enter their competition, under one of the two categories:

1. Young Kiwis Making a Difference (2-4 Minutes)
2. Inspiring Stories Open (Over 5 Minutes)

Entries close 10 September 2011. For submission details see www.inspiringstories.org.nz.

LEARNING LINKS

Urban Innovation Requires a Hackathon for Everyone

An idea out of San Francisco, USA, that suggests that innovation doesn't require money or competition, and that with collaboration, anything is possible.

[Read the article at shareable.net.](#)

Detroit, community resilience, and the American dream

When Milicent Johnson told friends and family she would be traveling to Detroit (US) to write about community resilience, she "got the same reaction from everyone: Silence". However, contrary to popular preconceptions, she discovered a city of people who "live in the biggest small town you'll ever experience and everyone's ready to pick up a shovel and work with you to build the future". Various people and projects are changing Detroit by putting community development in the hands of the community; building healthier, more connected community, one seed at a time; and giving students a chance to design the future.

Read the article at www.grist.org.

Free e-books: Urban Connectivity in an Age of Vulnerability

and Strategies for Bridging the Digital Divide

These books are available free as downloadable PDF files:

[In-Between Infrastructure: Urban Connectivity in an Age of Vulnerability](#)

Edited by Douglas Young, Patricia Burke Wood, and Roger Keil

[Information and Communication Technology Geographies: Strategies for Bridging the Digital Divide](#)

By Melissa R. Gilbert and Michele Masucci

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Connecting is good for health - mental and physical - Mental Health Foundation

As certain sports fixtures become increasingly large fixations for many around New Zealand, our thoughts are turning to the opportunities big events can provide to enhance neighbourly (as well as international) relations.

New studies released earlier this year are showing the importance of social connectedness to both our mental and physical wellbeing. In the lead up to [Neighbours Day Aotearoa](#) back in March, Amanda Bradley, Northern Development Manager of the Mental Health Foundation spoke to staff at Auckland District Health Board on this topic .

She discussed how “Flourishing’, a measure of mental health that has been developed within the last decade, can be used to determine the level of positive mental health in populations. When someone is flourishing they experience positive emotions, positive interest and engagement with the world around them, and ... better social relationships.

Amanda’s insights were based on the The Five Ways to Wellbeing, from a [Report by The Centre for Well-Being at the New Economics Foundation](#). The first of the five ways to wellbeing is to Connect! With the people around you, with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, at home, work, school and in your local community. “Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.” The other four strategies the report recommends are to Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give!

[Read more in Amanda’s full article, on the Neighbours Day Aotearoa website.](#)

Random Acts of Kindness Day: Thursday September 1

Everyone can use a random act of kindness, and anyone can be inspired to give one. We thought it worth mentioning that New Zealand’s Random Acts of Kindness Day is this Thursday, the 1st of September.

This year marks the 7th anniversary of RAK Day and New Zealand is the only country in the world with this celebration. RAK Day is all about people doing kind things for others – for no reason at all. To lift the kindness temperature in our country, step out of our comfort zone and do something randomly kind for a stranger or friend.

[Read more online.](#)

EVENTS

November Workshop: Partnering for Results (Auckland)

Join Thought Partners for an “opportunity to build knowledge and skills for successful partnering across organisations and sectors. This workshop, and tailored mentoring session, will provide you with inspiration, knowledge and tools to ensure your partnerships achieve results and move beyond good intentions. You will learn from New Zealand and international good practice”.

This workshop and mentoring session, is designed for those beginning, actively involved in, and those managing partnerships across public, private, community and philanthropic sectors. Come as a group of partners, or as an organisation planning your collaborations, and do real work together to accelerate your partnerships.

Dates: 2 and 3 November (plus mentoring opportunity following day)

For costs, full details and to register: See [Thought Partners website](#).

Social Entrepreneurs Fellowship: How Communities Heal (article series (online) and September 'Changemakers' Masterclass (Auckland))

How Communities Heal: Unique stories of a group of New Zealand social entrepreneurs, by Vivian Hutchinson and the New Zealand Social Entrepreneur Fellowship. The stories tell of their work to create systemic and sustainable solutions to New Zealand's social challenges.

Published in fortnightly instalments at www.nzsef.org.nz/howcommunitiesheal.

Auckland Social Entrepreneurs 'Changemakers Masterclass' 2011: Sunday 11 to Thursday 15 September 2011, Long Bay, Auckland

[Download flyer](#) for more details on speakers, the programme, venue, and registration.

Creating Transformative Change Workshop

31 October – 2 November

A three day workshop which enables practitioners from diverse backgrounds and agencies to explore change processes when working with individuals, groups and families. It draws on strengths based and community development approaches. Attendees will have many opportunities for reflecting on their practice and learning new skills for working with clients and for implementing these ideas into their agency.

The facilitators are highly experienced practitioners and the workshop is held on site at Te Aroha Noa so that participants are able to observe the implementation of the change strategies presented in the workshop. This workshop can be counted as continuing professional education and participants receive a certificate to confirm their participation in this workshop.

See full details online in our [Events Calendar](#).

ABOUT INSPIRING COMMUNITIES

To find out more about Inspiring Communities, our approach to learning, our framework for Community-Led Development, and more, visit: www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz

For all our latest news you can go straight to our to [Community News](#).

The work of Inspiring Communities is currently being supported by The Tindall Foundation, The Todd Foundation, the J R McKenzie Trust, Community Trust of Southland, BayTrust, ASB Community Trust, Slingshot-Call Plus, Auckland Council, TSB Trust, Lottery Community and the Lottery Community Sector Research Fund, Ideas Shop and many other generous people and organisations who contribute time, skills, meeting spaces and resources to help us grow the recognition, understanding and practice of community-led development in Aotearoa, NZ.

For more information [email us](#).

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