

Update No. 7 March/April 2009

Haere Mai and Welcome

Introduction

Albert Einstein said that problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them. Murray Edridge, (CE of Barnardos) and David Hanna (Director of Wesley Community Action) explore this in an information-filled, conversation about community-led development and their organisations. Murray comments that *if we are serious about social change in New Zealand, it is the communities and neighbourhoods that have the capability ... and this needs nurturing*. David says that for Wesley Community Action staff *it was the journey around strengths-based processes and practices that encouraged new questions and conversations and led to different possibilities and connections* (with community).

We look at the challenges and opportunities around change and community leadership from several perspectives in this issue.

In late March we hosted a forum in Auckland – *Working Together From the Neighbourhood Up*. More than 80 people heard about the exciting, multi-sector *Twin Streams* initiative in Waitakere, along with a fun and stimulating presentation from Mark Cabaj of Tamarack. People expressed a clear interest in a network, and sharing stories and resources when asked about how *Inspiring Communities* might add value to community-led development. In Auckland *We need connections with the whole of Auckland - not just pockets* was one comment.

Highlights from this issue are:

- ✘ Opportunities and challenges for two organisations who are leading the way with community-led development initiatives: Insights from Murray Edridge and David Hanna
- ✘ Otto Scharmer's "Theory U" from *Engage*, Tamarack's latest newsletter
- ✘ David Hanna reports on Tamarack's recent Collaborative Leadership Workshop
- ✘ Thoughts on aspects of leadership for community-led development from Alfred Ngaro
- ✘ Reports from the successful *Working Together From the Neighbourhood Up*, Forum in Auckland Region – March 27
- ✘ Royal Road Primary School takes the lead in Massey, Auckland

"Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say "We have done this ourselves".

Lao Tzu 600BC-531BC

Inspiring Communities is a nationwide group of initiatives in communities committed to a new way of doing things. We support local communities to achieve their vision and goals by:

- Promoting the power of working collaboratively
- Supporting leadership and learning for community-led development
- Linking people, projects and places
- Developing and sharing resources, tools and new knowledge
- Being a catalyst for change in communities of place

We operate an *Exchange* that links communities with others who are involved in community-led initiatives, and can offer information, advice and support.

The dynamics of community-led development inside two organisations: Summary of an interview by Jenny Blagdon with David Hanna, Director of Wesley Community Action and Murray Edridge, Chief Executive, Barnardos

1. Why do you see community-led development as being so important?

Murray: Community-led development is about making permanent and sustainable change. For this to happen there is a need for initiatives to be grounded in and owned by the community. If there is a sense of ownership, then there is also the opportunity for the community to develop its own capability and grow dynamically and organically. Ideally this means that, at some stage, we must have the vision that the community can care for itself. We must also be able to walk away and let it grow on its own.

David: Community-led development is inherently complex because it's about movement and messiness, or, in other words, about the complexities of individuals, families and communities. It provides a nice balance to an organisation which is focused on structure, programmes and accountabilities. This is important if we are to be an organisation which engages with communities creatively and effectively rather than just driving in and out to deliver a programme.



Murray Edridge

2. So why does it matter, if it matters, that it's in a community of place?

David: Geographical communities of place are where we experience life. This experience grounds us and highlights our awareness, our conscious presence in a community, which is important in terms of community action. Concepts and policies become concrete when they are applied in a local context. A sense of belonging comes from being aware of, and valuing, the place where we are located.

Murray: There is a need to be able to identify not just where we come from but the place where we belong. Even when we go to work, our place of being is where home is. Even though for some people that place may not be OK, ideally our community of place is what we identify with.

There is also a strength in community of place in the sense that we have common interests and issues with our neighbours, whether it's arguing with the council over local facilities or the rubbish collection. If we are serious about social change in New Zealand, it is communities and neighbourhoods that have the capability and this needs nurturing. Because we share a common purpose, the place we live in creates connections and a sense of belonging. However, this raises a question about the value of community for people whose families who don't function well, when home is not a place of refuge.

"If we are serious about social change in New Zealand, it is the communities and neighbourhoods that have the capability, and this needs nurturing."

3. Given those thoughts, what does that raise for your organisation in the way it's currently run?

David: While this can challenge the traditional assumptions people have about organisations, at the same time it can also provide the opportunity to be creative. We have anecdotal evidence of the increased value for staff when there is better engagement with the community.

Murray: Community-led development is quite a challenge to the traditional Barnardos model. But we need to think strategically about what is being delivered to a community. We need to ensure that what we are delivering is what a community wants, rather than what we think

The **Good Cents** initiative, part of the *Inspiring Communities* network, emerged from local conversations at the height of the economic boom in 2007. Wesley Board members were puzzled that, in spite of recent economic growth and high employment rates, demand for the local foodbank remained high. Close relationships with foodbank users themselves enabled staff to identify the underlying reasons. These families had become trapped in debt because of the exorbitant rates of interest charged by loan sharks or lenders of last resort.

Good Cents is working alongside groups of people with common experiences and stories around indebtedness and supporting them on their journey to a better financial future. The support that *Good Cents* gives varies depending on the direction groups take, but the emphasis remains on journeying together in a connected way, finding creative ways to build up and redefine the wealth of families and communities.

Conversations with Pacific communities and church groups are beginning to uncover possibilities that exist for these communities to lead the way in the *Good Cents* initiative, so that whole communities within Porirua will catch hold of a vision that sees customers finding solutions within their own communities - preferring to turn away from lenders of last resort

Good Cents is an initiative which operates on community-led development principles, driven by the stories of indebted people themselves and working to engage the wider community and business interests.

Matthew Crawshaw, Wesley Community Action

they want. We also need to reassess the places we work in, which may have developed due to historical opportunities or accidents.

David: And we need to let go, and pause and listen, which can be a challenge to organisations which have a sense of pride about their traditional work. I think sometimes there's an "organisational ego" that comes into play. That is quite hard to let go of when the organisation is bound in a place for a number of reasons.

4. What are the points of 'liftoff' that your organisations are using to connect the new ways of working with the ways you have worked in the past?

David: When there is trust or confidence internally within an organisation this can encourage conversations between unlikely groups. Within our organisation, it was the journey around strengths-based processes and practices that provided the environment for new questions and conversations to occur. This led to different possibilities and connections.

Murray: Our organisations have been good at what they do, and this has given them credibility and strength. However if our traditional services are not what a community wants or needs, and if they are not likely to contribute to a sustainable future, then we need to function differently. The question then is how to take the capability residing in the organisation and use it as a foundation for allowing the community to do something else. This means being prepared to listen and to learn as an organisation. It also means being able to give people and communities the ability to operate themselves. The vision is that external service providers won't be required forever.

5. What sort of approaches would you use to get people to the place where they're 'happy to let go'?

Murray: This means recognising that the outcome is more important than the characteristics or identity of an organisation. It means encouraging people to see that the organisation is merely a means to an end. At the same time it is vital to recognise that this can be difficult and scary for staff when it means a change to fundamental tenets.

David: For staff it is easier if they have the opportunity to experience the possibilities of a different way of working at the same time as they are letting go.

Murray: Even tiny returns, such as the glimpse of hope in someone's life, are important to keep up enthusiasm. And this raises the question of measuring success. There is a risk that unless we are clear about what success looks like we might miss it.

6. Handbrakes?

Murray: There are a number of barriers to success, some of which are mentioned above. Lack of patience is a barrier because outcomes may take a long time. And when you don't know quite where you're going, and you don't know whether

you're going to know when you get there, you need to establish milestones. These provide points of review, for critical reflection on progress, with the community. There is also the risk that, in an economic recession an organisation cannot commit to the long term. This may have the potential to do more damage than good.

David: One big hand-brake can be the binary thinking which is dominant in our society. This good/bad and right/wrong way of thinking is not helpful for community development processes which are emergent and unpredictable.

Murray: And there is a tension here too when resources are limited, as they always are. It is difficult to say to staff that money is being directed from traditional services into innovative initiatives which don't have a clearly defined outcome. Managing that is a challenge for the organisation.

7. Is this the time to dive deeper or is it the time now to pull back for a bit, to regroup?

Murray: It's important to build on the current momentum around empowering communities. In times of adversity, communities often come together and there may be an important role for organisations to support this. The concept of money-mapping, or understanding the flow of finances and the resource base in communities could be useful during such times.



David Hanna

David: There is a particular need for more rigour and discipline around the understanding of these dynamics, no matter how emergent they are. This applies to how we talk about them, how we understand them, how we record them, and the evaluation process. This means an improvement in our ability to capture the right information and evaluate our services. The *Inspiring Communities* Learning Forum has provided regular opportunities to discuss issues around evaluation language and rigour.

Murray: Yes, the *Inspiring Communities* Learning Forum is an enormous resource with the capacity to do much more than one organisation can ever do on its own. It provides an opportunity to share knowledge which creates a far bigger outcome than could ever be achieved otherwise.

8. How would you know if Community-led development had become embedded – what would the indicators be? Internally?

David: There would be different and multiple players involved, with better shared vision. Groupings will be more diverse, not just sectoral. Community leaders will emerge in a self-generating way. This has happened with the Good Cents project where the women largely are now leading the process, rather than the employed facilitator or educator.

Internally it is likely the language of policies and processes will be different, In the future reports may be a shared approach by individuals, agencies, businesses and

Great Start Taita is a community initiative, which is supported and funded by Barnardos – but not owned by Barnardos. It also has support from the Ministry of Social Development through the Early Years Service Hub initiative. It is a loose, informal collaboration of different community groups, service providers and residents who live and work in the Taita area and who are interested in Taita as a great place to live.

Great Start has two main aims:

Connecting people to people: building networks of people who know each other, have fun together and can help each other (not only by providing services but as friends, neighbours and colleagues).

Doing things differently: working creatively, building trust, building bridges across traditional barriers, learning new things and doing things together as a whole community (rather than as separate organisations, groups, families or individuals).

Supporting parents, young children and families is a strong focus of Great Start. This includes finding ways to make connections across cultures, across sectors, across generations, and with people in the community who become invisible or are often considered 'too hard to deal with'.

Great Start has linked into the *Inspiring Communities* Network as a way of learning more about how to 'practise' community led development.

Karen Clifford
Great Start Taita

government, and not just come from one organisation.

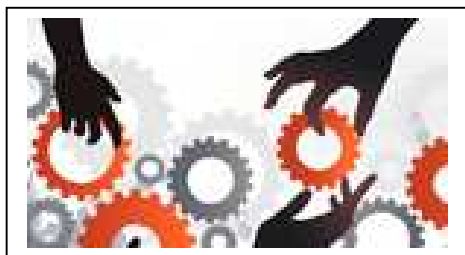
Murray: Yes, internal documentation would be less prescriptive and detailed, but it would have clear measurement points and determinants of direction. There may be different levels of investment in different communities. I think you'd know because communities would tell you. You'd get known as the organisation prepared to engage on a different basis and the process would get easier. You'd become better experienced at making a difference. And although there is obviously no model that fits all, there will be some learnings from communities that can be applied very effectively elsewhere.

A good indication that we are changing will be when we can go into a community, we are comfortable asking people what they want, and equally comfortable working together to respond.

Edited and abridged by Helen Wilson.

Insights into Leadership

Leading from the Future as it Emerges: Theory U



In the same spirit as Albert Einstein, Otto Scharmer suggests that a new collective leadership capacity is needed to meet the complex social, environmental and economic challenges we face today. According to Scharmer, “we know a great deal about what leaders do and how they do it. But we know very little about the inner place, the source from which they operate.”

Successful leadership depends on the quality of attention and intention that people bring to any situation. Two leaders facing the same circumstances and doing the same thing can bring about completely different outcomes, depending on the inner place from which they each operate. Scharmer explores this inner place in leaders – he calls it the “source” – in the “Theory U” model. Scharmer says that those who are in touch with this source “experience the future as if it was “wanting to be born.” He calls this “presencing” and says the result often generates “ideas for meeting challenges and for bringing into being an otherwise impossible future.”

The journey through Theory U’s Five Movements shows how the capacity for presencing can be developed. It is a journey that also develops the following seven essential leadership capacities:

1. **Holding the space** of listening to others and to oneself. And listening to what emerges from the collective. Effective listening requires the creation of open space in which others can contribute to the whole.
2. **Observing** – The capacity to suspend the “voice of judgment” is key to moving from projection to true observation.
3. **Sensing** – The preparation for the experience at the bottom of the U – presencing – requires the tuning of three instruments: the Open Mind, the Open Heart, and the Open Will. This opening process is not passive but an active “sensing” together as a group. While an Open Heart allows us to see a situation from the whole, the Open Will enables us to begin to act from the emerging whole.

4. *Presencing* – The capacity to connect to the deepest source of self and will allows the future to emerge from the whole rather than from a smaller part or special interest group.

5. *Crystallizing* – When a small group of people commit themselves to the purpose and outcomes of a project, the power of their intention creates an energy field that attracts people, opportunities, and resources that make things happen.

6. *Prototyping* – Moving down the left side of the U requires the group to open up and deal with the resistance of thought, emotion, and will; moving up the right side requires the integration of thinking, feeling, and will in the context of practical applications and learning by doing.

7. *Performing* – A prominent violinist once said that he couldn't simply play his violin in Chartres cathedral; he had to "play" the entire space, what he called the "macro violin," in order to do justice to both the space and the music. Likewise, organisations need to perform at this macro level. They need to convene front-line people who are connected by the same values and are able to engage in a way that allows a multi-stakeholder gathering to shift from debating to co-creating the new.

from Engage, the latest Tamarack newsletter, by Mark Cabaj with Sylvia Cheuy (abridged)

Access *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges* by Otto Scharmer

Executive summary at www.theoryu.com/documentd/Theory_U_Exec_Summary.pdf

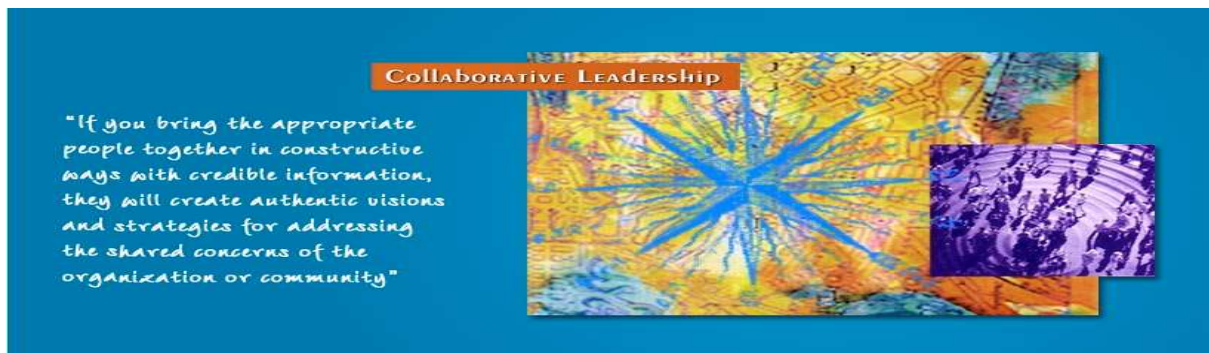
The entire book available at Otto Scharmer's website www.ottoscharmer.com

Collaborative Leadership Workshop: *Collaboration in Action*

In June 2008 David Hanna attended the Tamarack Institute's three day Collaborative Leadership Workshop in Canada. David chairs the Management Group of the Community-Led Development Trust.

Reflecting on the workshop, David says that participants had to confront a number of paradoxes around the notion of collaboration but that key resource person, David Chrislip, understood well this paradoxical landscape in which many groups operate. Some of the issues explored were:

- *Collaboration is not exclusive of competition.*
- *Sound planning needs to be balanced with openness to what emerges* and is unplanned. All communities are dynamic and events or opportunities can occur serendipitously
- How do we allow an organisation to form (and re-form) in a way that doesn't isolate it from the energy (need/aspiration) that was its source? History has shown us that organisational structure can destroy the vision. *Inspiring Communities* use of words such as '**viral organisations**', '**exchange**', '**networks**' is a positive way of confronting this issue.
- *There is a creative tension between complexity and simplicity.* We talk of simple solutions to complex problems. We need to try and capture the simplicity of the journey.
- A staff review exercise known as the *Reflected Best Self* is a valuable research-backed tool focusing on strengths without undervaluing the importance of recognising weaknesses.



Above: from David Chrislip's website: www.skillfulmeans.org

For information on **Reflected Best Self** a useful link is: Center for Positive Organisational Scholarship at University of Michigan www.bus.umich.edu/Positive/

Alfred Ngaro – *Inspiring Communities* supporting community leadership



Alfred Ngaro is a New Zealand born Cook Islander. He is married to Mokauina with four children, three boys and one daughter. Alfred worked with Mary-Jane Rivers to set up the Inspiring Communities Exchange and will be focusing (part-time) on supporting leadership in communities for community-led development to flourish.

I watched a movie recently with my sons. It was about a father trying to protect his sons from reliving his experiences of the brutal and harsh realities of war. He didn't succeed at this. The sons were drawn into war and sadly one died. The father was forced to think again and face his fears. Through doing

this he gained a compelling understanding of his sons, what motivated them and the cause they saw as being worthy to fight and risk their lives for.

The father in this movie was trapped by fear based on his own past experiences and a wish to protect his sons. He came to realise that true love for his sons meant supporting them in their decisions about the causes that were so compelling for them. Sometimes people need to be encouraged to find the truth within themselves. Sometimes this can be very hard.

The son, who was tragically killed, identified the key theme of the movie when he said 'stay the course, Dad'. In other words *stay focused, don't lose heart, keep your optimism*. The movie was dramatic. Our everyday lives aren't always that dramatic. But the same need to discover what we believe in and stay focused on may be just as important to ensure our streets, neighbourhoods or communities are safe, active, vibrant and thriving. And when we do this we are leading.

There are lots of different ways of being a leader and leadership development is ongoing. Sometimes our most challenging times as leaders come not so much from without but from within. So personal support as well as professional development is important. Resilience in leadership comes from our personal growth.

How do we grow this resilience and our capacity for leadership? How important is leadership? What are the best ways of growing and supporting leadership? These are core questions for ensuring durable, dynamic and adaptable communities, and a key question for *Inspiring Communities*. That's when training, tools, practice, peer support mentoring and

tips on leadership such as: negotiating skills, strategic planning, mobilising, and reframing can be very helpful.

These are the questions we asked 80 people at the Auckland, *Inspiring Communities* workshop held on 27 March. Here is a summary of responses and suggestions.

Helping change attitudes and support leadership. There is a tall poppy syndrome. Instead we need to acknowledge leaders as important and help people step up:

- *Small community groups to identify leaders and support these people*
- *Redefine leadership to include community-based leaders as well as business leaders and government managers*
- *Good positive media coverage that can help people realise that they can lead together in their communities.*
- *Developing a robust national network to help people realise what's possible*
- *Stop talking about emerging leaders and support the leaders who are already operating*

Increasing access to tools and support:

- *Such as peer and individual mentoring, buddying, coaching, courses, workshops, knowledge, ideas and examples, tool kits, a website with ideas*

Developing and supporting varieties of leadership

- *Creating community models for leadership development*
- *Supporting leadership development opportunities that are connected to what is happening on the ground in communities of place*
- *Learning from and supporting cross-boundary, collaborative leadership – helping communities and organisations work collaboratively*
- *Shared and partnering leadership to avoid silo-based leadership development*
- *Understanding the essence of leadership and what leadership in community looks like in practice*

Alfred can be contacted through: exchange@inspiringcommunities.org.nz

Working Together from the Neighbourhood Up

On March 27th, *Inspiring Communities* hosted a workshop that brought together people and places from across the Auckland Region who were keen to talk, share and learn more about community-led development.

Around 80 people from a range of community and government agencies, funders and academic institutions attended the half day session. The workshop kicked off with Jenny Chilcott, Rochana Sheward and April Nicholson's powerful presentation on

"Working Together for Healthy Streams and Strong Communities" - the Project Twin Streams (PTS) story. A partnership between Waitakere City Council and six community organisations in the Opanuku, Oratia and Swanson water catchments. It links the local environment, local people and community wellbeing and is a fantastic example of a sustainable community development approach that really supports local people leading. For more information see: www.projecttwinstreams.org.nz.



Next on the agenda was inspiration from Tamarack's Mark Cabaj who focused on *neighbourhood development in uncertain times*.

Mark was quick to highlight that neighbourhood development is a growing movement internationally right now. He reinforced the view that multi-sectoral, collaborative approaches that value, empower and strengthen resident-led voices and action are key.

Neighbourhood Development: Seven Things That Keep Coming Up.....	
1.	Social Capital
2.	Locally Influenced & Responsive Institutions
3.	Systems of Support
4.	Comprehensive Lens, Cross Boundary Work
5.	Linking to the Outside
6.	Resident Engagement, Leadership, Institutional Capacity
7.	Adaptive and Long Term

Having worked on, and learnt from, a range of neighbourhood initiatives in Canada, Mark's presentation honed in on seven major areas to focus on when building from the neighbourhood up (see opposite).

Mark told lots of great stories! For example, in Chicago following the big heatwave in 1995, hugely different mortality rates between two adjoining neighbourhoods North and South Lawndale actually came down to social capital, neighbourhood design and life. Things like people knowing their neighbours, having support networks that quickly

responded in times of crisis, and knowing that if fire hydrants were kicked down to give water to those on ground level that the older adults living high up on the 5th floor of apartment buildings would perish. These were key factors in why North Lawndale had a mortality rate 6 times lower than neighbouring South Lawndale.

In another Chicago story, a local medical centre was seen as not delivering effective healthcare for local people, so they self organised and 'captured' roles on the board. New community leadership took a fresh look at the "high number and high cost" cases – which included car accidents, dog bites and bronchial issues. Rather than continue to fix problems, they worked on some community solutions – paying local children to catch the town's stray dogs; growing and supplying fruit and vegetables for seniors to help build immunity to bronchial issues, and analysing where vehicle accidents were happening and working with local authorities to get it sorted. And yes, there were marked reductions in traffic accident injuries and dog bites presenting at the A&E as a result!

Here are just a few memorable quotes from Mark's presentation.....

<p><i>"We need to learn, not spend our way out of this"</i></p> <p><i>"There will be failures along the way – we need to make them smart failures, always asking ourselves what did we learn?"</i></p> <p><i>"In the times ahead we need to be courageous not brave –brave is about having no fear, being courageous is about acknowledging the fear and going ahead anyway"</i></p>

Contributed by Megan Courtney

Links and resources:

Annie E Casey Foundation: <http://www.aecf.org/>

Aspen Institute: <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/community-change>

Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative: <http://www.dsni.org/>

Jane Jacobs: *The death and life of great American Cities*. "Perhaps the most influential single work in the history of town planning...a work of literature" ([The New York Times Book Review](#)).

Eric Klinenberg: *Heat Wave: A social autopsy of disaster in Chicago*. [University of Chicago Press](#)

Tamarack Institute of Community Engagement- <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/index.php>. Sign up here to Tamarack's free monthly *Engage E-Bulletin* which is packed full of learning and new ideas.

Community-led Development Auckland: What next?

The March 27th workshop also enabled some dialogue around good examples of community-led development in the Auckland Region and how links and learnings around sustainable community initiatives might be strengthened. Attendees were asked what inspired them to come to the workshop. For many it was to hear Mark, others talked about wanting to talk and share experiences to help them be more effective in their own communities, and others were keen to build networks with other passionate, community development thinkers and doers – and to connect with *Inspiring Communities*.

Ideas for strengthening neighbourhood development in the Auckland Region were also sought, to which there were a range of responses – from a staging a coup (!), to resourcing grassroots leadership development and building closer connections at street level. Others spoke about proactively connecting schools and community development, freeing up resources to allow innovative approaches to be driven and built at real community level, and needing to find new ways to reinforce and grow confidence within the community in its capacity to create, build and drive change.

With the Royal Commission's recommendations on Auckland's governance due out that afternoon, attendees also noted the importance of having community-led development at the heart of the Region's new governance structures. With the observation that formal structures and governance arrangements are only one part of Auckland's future. The voices, visions and leadership from neighbourhood levels are equally important.

“We need connections with the whole of Auckland, not just pockets”

“Auckland needs systems and processes that support Auckland to be an interconnected network of communities”

“We need regional governance approaches that support community-led development”

“We need better collaboration to build and empower communities and neighbourhoods”

“We need training workshops on community-led development principles and practices”

“We need the ability to have locally based solutions – even within 1 city”

Workshop participants were also asked how *Inspiring Communities* might add value to promoting and strengthening community-led development within the Auckland Region. At the top of people's list was support for the development of a new regional community-led development network that would focus on sharing stories, resources, issues and solutions.

Exploring and scoping the potential for a new network will be one of Megan Courtney's first tasks. Megan has recently joined the *Inspiring Communities* Exchange Development Team, with her part time role taking a focus on Auckland. Fresh from leading the Massey Matters community building project in Waitakere City, Megan is looking forward to brokering some new regional relationships and community connections. If you have some ideas or would like to know more, contact Megan on megan.courtney@inspiringcommunities.org.nz



L to R: *Inspiring Communities* team at the recent Auckland Workshop
Megan Courtney, Mary-Jane Rivers, Mark Cabaj and Alfred Ngaro.

The sky's the limit: Primary school children grow their own fruit and vegetables

There is no stopping the students from Royal Road Primary School in the West Auckland suburb of Massey. With the support of the principal Wayne Leighton, these children have been planting, tending and cooking their own vegetables. This collaborative effort with the Waitemata District Health Board aims to encourage children and their families to eat more healthily. As a result families have asked for gardening kits to start gardens at home.



The next plan is to plant an orchard of feijoas, guavas and citrus trees to provide fruit for the pupils to eat in school breaks. This project provides an inspirational example of how a practical place-based initiative can bring groups in the community together to work towards increasingly ambitious but achievable goals.

Royal Road primary school provides leadership in the community, providing a centre for community meetings and making meaningful connections between school, families and the neighbourhood.

Information taken from "A growing awareness of healthy living" in NZ Herald, Thursday April 2nd 2009 or visit www.nzherald.co.nz

Coming events & resources

The International Journal of Neighbourhood Renewal Annual Conference 2009

This inaugural conference will be held in London from 19th-20th November and will showcase 45 neighbourhood renewal organisations from round the world with five award categories. There will be high quality speakers from both academic and policy implementation fields. For details see conference leaflet: www.ihbc.org.uk/events/docs/neighbourhood201109.pdf. Free places are available for voluntary members of neighbourhood renewal schemes. See above link for information about other delegate categories. To register as a delegate or send a nomination for an award email neighbourhoodjournal@googlemail.com

Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC) Working Together Conference 2009

This will be held from 14-15 May at the Intercontinental Hotel, Wellington. ALAC is pleased to be updating its 2009 Working Together Conference programme. All the latest information can be found at : <http://www.alac.co.nz/UpComingEvents.aspx>. Please also find information on accommodation options, and a template for abstracts on the website.

Building Community Centred Economies, Brisbane June 2009

A Conference Hosted Jointly by:

The International Association for Community Development & CD Queensland

The conference hosts invite people to be part of this conference with a difference – a think, talk and do conference focused on how we can build strong, creative and sustainable local economies into the future. The over-arching conference theme focuses on the importance of building community-centred economies using community development methodologies. This is a timely and universally critical theme that recognises the interconnectedness of economic, social and environmental issues. www.cdconference.com.au

Family-centred communities: The planning process. Report No. 1/09

Families carry out many functions that are critically important to the wellbeing of society. However, our research suggests that the importance of the family is not always reflected in public policies and services. The Families Commission has reviewed a range of literature relating to a family-centred approach to community and town planning. This research tells us that when community planners focus on the needs of families, the whole community benefits.

The findings of this review will contribute to an initiative by the Commission to encourage a group of councils to take a family-centred approach to planning and decision-making around a community project. The learning from this cooperative exercise will be used to help all councils to put families at the centre of their community planning.

This information is from the Families Commission website at www.nzfamilies.org.nz. Visit this website to download the full report.

Creating Vibrant Communities: How Individuals and Organizations from Diverse Sectors of Society Are Coming Together to Reduce Poverty in Canada, edited by Paul Born, 2008.



Equal parts inspiration, perspiration, and information — a book that is sure to take the Vibrant Communities story to new heights as it begins its next exciting phase.

In Canada, “poverty reduction” is no longer a “wouldn’t it be nice” dream discussed after yet another failure to make a dent in an age-old problem. It’s a living, breathing, exhilarating reality.

Because all across the country people are approaching poverty in a positive, creative, and energetic way. They are doing so courtesy of a new social phenomenon called Vibrant Communities: a network of people who are getting people together — citizens (no matter what their income), community developers, business people, and representatives from all levels of government — to determine needs, community assets, and strategies. They’re putting plans into action with astonishing results.

This information is taken from the Tamarack website at www.tamarackcommunity.ca. Links available on their home page for ordering copies.

The March/April newsletter has been produced by Helen Wilson, and Mary-Jane Rivers Thanks to David Hanna, Murray Edridge, Jenny Blagdon, Megan Courtney, and Alfred Ngaro for their valuable contributions. The next newsletter will be published in May 2009.

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