



A WELCOMING COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS:
A Social Innovation Toolkit

This toolkit is dedicated to the place I was born, raised, and will always call home, the municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc.

- Sherri Kroll, Executive Director,
Middlesex Community Living

“The greatness of a community
is most accurately measured
by the compassionate actions
of its members.”

- Corretta Scott King,
DoingGoodTogether.org

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INTRODUCTION

Middlesex Community Living (MCL) is delighted to have partnered with People Minded Business Inc. (PMB) to provide organizations and municipalities aspiring to create welcoming communities where everyone belongs with this user-friendly social innovation toolkit. The toolkit contains all the key elements of a community-wide success story that was initiated by MCL, facilitated by PMB, championed by a diverse Steering Committee, and achieved with the citizens of Strathroy-Caradoc.

It all began in 2018, when one idea sparked the interest of MCL and soon ignited a fiery community-wide initiative. The organization, which supports people with developmental disabilities, had just completed an inclusive strategic planning process where its number one priority was established: "To Promote & Advance Life in Community for People with Developmental Disabilities." Recognizing that its employees would have many ideas on ways to achieve this goal, MCL hired PMB to facilitate a creative problem-solving session during its annual Employee Professional Development Day. It was during an ideation activity that a direct support professional proposed this idea: "What if we expand our goal to include advancing life for ALL people in our community and make it a community-wide initiative. This could be done by recognizing businesses and services that demonstrate that they welcome everyone with a decal of distinction, which they will display on their front doors. Through this initiative, the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc will establish that it is 'A Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs'."

And the idea was born.

Shortly afterward, MCL applied for and was awarded an Ontario provincial government modernization grant that provided the organization with the resources to bring to life the 'Strathroy-Caradoc Welcoming Community Social Innovation Project.' At the time of developing this toolkit, the number of businesses and services in Strathroy-Caradoc displaying the 'Decal of Distinction' was 62. Imagine, the first thing you see when entering City Hall, the fire hall, the local police station, chartered banks, a yoga studio, an automobile body shop, and many, many more establishments is a colourful decal of distinction that was co-created by members of the community declaring that this place welcomes you and you belong here.

Strathroy-Caradoc is pleased to be laying a path that other like-minded and good-spirited communities can follow to establish that they are also a welcoming community where everyone belongs. This toolkit was prepared to guide the work of these communities. It gives organizers an 8-Step Social Innovation Process to follow. Its design is simple, the tools useful, and the steps and project are replicable.

We wish you enjoyment and success in your journey. Ours continues to be a joy ride.



OVERVIEW: A WELCOMING COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS

Social Innovation Primer

Before delving into the 8-Step Social Innovation Process, let's take a look at the concepts of 'innovation' and 'social innovation,' and gain a better understanding of what the project looks and feels like in its entirety.

Innovation on its own is purposeful creativity. Innovation involves applying creativity to solve a problem or seize an opportunity. Social innovation is innovation that is good for society. More and more, social innovation is used to tackle social needs and societal challenges. Social innovations are both social in their ends and in their means. Through the social innovation process, tools and techniques are used to spark new thinking and ideas to address a social need, and to create new social relationships.

THE AIM OF THE 'WELCOMING COMMUNITY SOCIAL INNOVATION INITIATIVE'

The social need addressed through the initiative and toolkit is the need for everyone who lives, works, or visits your community to feel equally welcome and that they belong. The social means to address this need involves following a tested comprehensive, creative, collaborative, and inclusive process that centers around a large number of community members participating in forums where together they will:

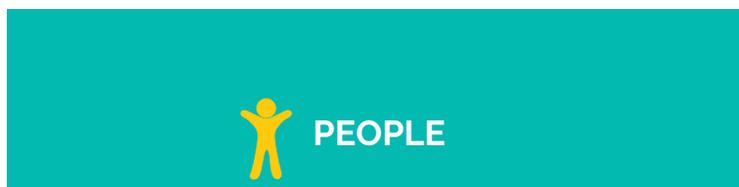
- Design A Decal of Distinction - This is a community designed sign/sticker that will be affixed to doors of participating businesses and services. The images in the decal capture the essence of the 'Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative' – to open new doors and widen existing ones for all people who live, work, or visit your community to enter, be welcomed, and feel that they belong.
- Define Qualities of a Welcoming Community – Together, members of the community identify the core qualities and behaviours that must be present to display your community's decal.

Imagine, not a handful but a community hall full of people gathering, new friendships forming, and enlightening conversations taking place – ones that potentially change previously held views, opinions, and ways people behave. Afterward, a ground swell of local establishments will engage in the community-wide initiative, and colourful decals of distinction will adorn more and more entryways that customers and visitors

can step through, with assurance that they will have a welcoming experience and feel that they belong. Participating establishments will receive plenty of recognition in social media shout-outs, local news stories, and mentions at community events for being socially conscious businesses and services that are contributing to your community's well-being and being the change that they want to see in the world.

THE SECRET SAUCE

The secret sauce or 'magic' of this 8-Step social innovation initiative is not one particular ingredient, but rather the right blend of the following three:



The Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative will involve a variety of people to fulfill key roles:

- **Leader** to bring people together, inspire a shared vision, and incite action
- **Coordinator** to manage the project, organize events, take care of details, & take action
- **Committee** of 8 – 10 diverse people who represent the array of people who make-up your community. They are enthused about the project, some have influence in the broader community, and all are action oriented
- **Community Members** will be invited to participate in an interactive community forum and afterward embrace the initiative and help it gain momentum and traction
- **External Facilitator** might prove helpful for some aspects of the project, especially when bringing many community members together to connect and collaborate at the forum



PROCESS

You will take the following 8-steps to produce the decal and criteria, and most importantly to achieve the desired outcome: to establish your community as 'A Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs':

STEP 1 - Mobilize Then Organize Form a Task Force comprised of a blended group of people representing the make-up of the community. Gather, organize and launch initiative.

STEP 2 - Map Out Your Community Map out key people and elements in the broader community, targeting people who are influencers, quick to engage, next level adopters, & others to be informed.

STEP 3 - Reach Out & Engage with Community Members Meet with individuals and target groups to get people involved, excited and engaged in the project.

STEP 4 - Host Inclusive & Interactive Community Forums Invite the general public to community forums. Facilitate wide-spread awareness to the broader initiative, get insights & input from all attendees into the co-creation of decal of distinction & list of qualities.

STEP 5 - Develop Your Community's Ideas into a Prototype Design a decal of distinction and list of qualities businesses and services must demonstrate to put decal on display.

STEP 6 – Officially Launch 'Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative, Build Momentum & Embed in Community'

Identify target groups, messaging and methods to reach most or all community businesses and services. Include hosting an event to officially launch the distribution of a Decal of Distinction. Take action, promote engagers, build on wins, learn from missteps, experience success.

STEP 7 – Monitor & Evaluate Social Innovation Initiative

Gather data on social indicators of success. Use a variety of methods and include numerical data & stories to measure and share results.

STEP 8 – Reach Out & Scale Out

Extend invitations to other organizations and municipalities to join the quest in becoming a 'Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs'



PLACES

People involved in the process will meet in welcoming environments that support collaboration. All businesses and services in your community will be equally encouraged to take part in the social innovation initiative.



"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED PEOPLE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."

- MARGRET MEAD

STEP 1 - MOBILIZE THEN ORGANIZE

Overview

The first step you will take in the social innovation process involves bringing together a diverse group of people in your community to form a Task Force/ Committee/ Working Group - choose a term that works for you. We will use the term 'Task Force' throughout the toolkit.

Ideally, the Task Force should be comprised of a few people from the organization that is spearheading the initiative, and representatives from local government, businesses, and community services. All should be keen to create positive and sustainable social change by establishing your community as 'A Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs.'

NOTE: *Where there is a red asterisk by a task there is additional information provided on the [Experience Tips page](#)

STEP ONE - MOBILIZE THEN ORGANIZE - TASK CHECKLIST

- * Assign a Project Lead** – Ideally the project lead is someone who is well-established in your organization and the community, is seen as having influence, and has the gift to inspire a shared vision. This person will be “the face of the initiative” at the onset.
- Assign a Project Coordinator** – This person is detail oriented, has great organization skills, and likes to get things done behind the scenes and in preparation for meetings and events.
- * Create a list of diverse people** who live and/or work in your community whom you think would be interested in and add value to the Task Force – include a wide-range of adults of all ages and be intentional about creating a blended group of people re: ethnicity, religion, LGBTQ2, professions, abilities, group affiliations, and so on...
- Write a script for reaching out to prospective Task Force members** – Appeal to their desire to be a part of a high-profile, community-wide initiative that is poised to have positive impacts on every member of your municipality. Include in your script, 'what's in it for them – socially, politically, & possibly financially', and 'what's in it for the community.'
- Set a date for Project Launch meeting** – To promote a decent sized turn-out, best to set the meeting date approximately one to two months out from when you first reach out to prospective Task Force members.
- Project Lead reach out to each prospective Task Force member** in a way that will garner each person's attention and engagement. Methods include picking-up the phone & calling people directly; speaking to them in-person over coffee, by appointment at their place of work, or approaching them at an upcoming community or social event; sending an email invite – whichever approach aligns with how to best connect, get their attention, and make them curious enough that they will attend the first meeting or send an alternate.



Host Launch Meeting – Suggested agenda:

- **Introductions 1st** – meeting facilitator should begin by having all attendees introduce themselves & identify what it was that motivated them to come - this is great information to reference later when the Project Lead & Coordinator begin planning for getting people to return to the next meeting
- **Social Innovation Primer** – As laid-out in the 'social innovation primer' section of the toolkit, provide attendees with a definition of social innovation & some examples of other successful projects
- **Provide an Overview of the Initiative** – As noted in the toolkit 'overview' section, describe the aim of the initiative, and cover three part secret sauce – people, process, place. Also, consider sharing Strathroy-Caradoc's success story as a way for attendees to get a clear picture of the project, from start to fruition
- **Discuss and Draft a Task Force Terms of Reference** – There's no need to get too formal when covering this agenda item, but there are some important "need to know" details that are important to cover-off and determine as a group: roles & responsibilities of the Lead, the Coordinator & Task Force members, frequency of meetings (probably 6 to 8 total - 3 leading up to Community Forum & 3 afterward), participation in awarding decals, decision-making process (for example, aim for consensus & when not reached, majority rules), and issues of potential conflict-of-interest
- **Acknowledge Each Person's Gift/Talent/Offering** – Wrap-up the meeting by having each attendee share what they believe they can offer the Task Force given their lived experience and personal &/or professional role within your community. If they don't see themselves participating on the Task Force further, give them permission to say so & invite them to suggest someone else whom they think might bring value to the initiative
- **Together, Articulate the Task Forces' Overarching Goal** – For example the goal might be: "To spearhead a social innovation initiative that establishes our community as a Welcome Community Where Everyone Belongs."
- **Set Date for Next Task Force Meeting** – Try to set the date for within one month of the Launch meeting to keep momentum moving forward

EXPERIENCE TIPS

- Because MCL was the organization in Strathroy-Caradoc to initiate the project and secured the funds to develop and implement it, the Executive Director initially took on the role of Lead; however, she was very intentional about inviting other members of the committee to be spokespeople and co-lead, as she wanted Strathroy-Caradoc residents to understand that the project was a collective one belonging to the community, and not solely MCL driven nor solely focused exclusively on including people with developmental disabilities experiencing inclusive lives in society – the thrust of the initiative was for ALL people to be equally welcome & belong.
- Aim for a Task Force of 8 – 10 members & be prepared for and okay with changes to membership over time. It is better to start-off with too many people around the table, as it is likely some will be unable to commit to regular involvement.
- Members of the Strathroy-Caradoc Steering Committee included:
 - MCL Executive Director (Project Lead),
 - MCL Manager (Coordinator),
 - A person with a developmental disability,
 - Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, Economic Development Officer,
 - Chamber of Commerce, General Manager,
 - Business Owner, Denning's Strathroy Funeral Home
 - Business Owner, Stellar Coaching + Consulting
 - Youth program Director, and
 - PMB Consultant & Facilitator,
- Show Appreciation at Launch Meeting – splurge if you can on some snack foods & refreshments. Consider purchasing snacks from a locally owned bakery or business to send the message that this project is all about benefitting “local community.”
- Slide Deck – use a slide deck with compelling visuals at the launch meeting to capture the imaginations of attendees, and to inspire them to commit and get others involved in what is sure to be an innovative project
- Strathroy-Caradoc's Story – Checkout the 'Strathroy-Caradoc Welcome Community' Facebook page where you can copy photos of the Decal of Distinction & community members being awarded theirs as a way to paint the picture of what you hope to closely replicate in your community.
 - See: <https://www.facebook.com/strathroycaradocwelcome>



"STRENGTH LIES IN DIFFERENCES, NOT IN SIMILARITIES."

- STEPHEN R. COVEY

STEP 2 - MAP OUT YOUR COMMUNITY

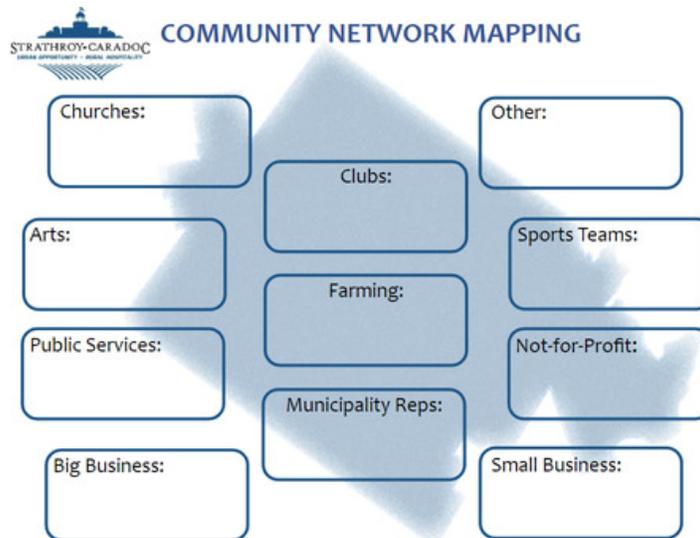
Overview

The second step you will take in the social innovation process involves mapping out your community and networks. This is a participatory activity aimed at identifying specific places, people, and pathways that should lead to your collective desired destination: establishing your community as 'A Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs.'

Completing the map is an important action toward getting many people to soon come out to a Community Forum event – a key activity in the process. It is here that a blended group of people will connect and collaborate as an energized collective and focus on the achievement of your shared goal. But first, you have to take step 2 and identify WHO to inform.

STEP TWO - MAP OUT YOUR COMMUNITY - TASK CHECKLIST

- Create a mapping tool that captures the key elements of your community.** Pictured below is the one created by Strathroy-Caradoc's working group, which notes the key elements of their community (Note: the shadow in the background is a topographic map of the municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc.) Some of the categories you identify will likely be the same as Strathroy-Caradoc's, while others will be different, as each community is unique.



- Send the map out to Task Force members in advance of meeting** and suggest they take a few minutes beforehand to note some of their key connections. Also consider having some of your well connected employees fill it in and hand it in to you prior to the next Task Force meeting – the more input the better!
- * Host your second Task Force meeting and involve members in an interactive activity focused on filling in the Community Map together.** Capture:
 - The names of the various entities that fit under each category, for example, various sports clubs, church & cultural groups, businesses, public & social services, etc...
 - Add new categories as they pop-up in conversation
 - For each entity, name a person(s) who is affiliated with it & who will need to be contacted & made aware of the initiative & upcoming Community Forum
 - Add additional names of quick engagers/people who are likely to support the initiative, attend and tell other people about the upcoming Community Forum

EXPERIENCE TIPS

- **Completing the Map** - When facilitating the completion of the Map, be mindful about including entities and people whose perspectives, views and voices will vary, including but not limited to:
 - People of all ages – children, youth, young adults, middle-age, seniors
 - Municipality representatives
 - Business Community
 - Other community event organizers
 - Non-profits
 - Public Services – Police, Fire Dept., Community Centre, Newcomer Centre, Library, etc..
 - Ethnic / Cultural Groups & Clubs
 - Military
 - LGBTQ2
 - Seasonal residents
 - Health sector
 - Education sector
 - Clubs – Chamber, Rotary, PTA, Knights of Columbus, ...
 - Sports Teams
 - Churches or Spiritual Centres
 - Arts Centres, local theatre
 - Others....



"IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST GO ALONE, IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR GO TOGETHER."

- AFRICA PROVERB

STEP 3 – REACH OUT & ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Overview

The third step you will take in the social innovation process involves determining the various ways that you will reach out to community members to inform them and engage them in the initiative – ways that will get their attention, pique their curiosity, motivate them to get involved, show-up on the day of the Community Forum, and importantly, participate afterward. This task can be completed during the second Steering Committee meeting, or you might hold a third meeting for this purpose.

STEP THREE - REACH OUT & ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS - TASK CHECKLIST

- Set a date and times for the Community Forum day** – Consider hosting 2-3, two-hour forums in one-day, likely one morning &/or afternoon session & one evening session. This will accommodate the participation of community members with varying schedules.
- * **Determine a location to host the Community Forum** – Identify one or two centrally located venues where you can host the Community Forum. You will likely need a space that holds 100 people or more. The Coordinator can reach out immediately to confirm where there is availability to host the forum on your chosen date.
- Identify Who on the Community Map will be contacted directly by Task Force members** to inform them of the upcoming Community Forum & encourage their engagement in the initiative. This might be done by email, in-person, or telephone – whichever method each Task Force member thinks will work best – they know their contacts best.
- Identify various ways in which you will inform the general public about the Community Forum.** Methods might include, but are not limited to:
 - Posters/Notices delivered to many of the places noted on Community Map
 - Social media platforms, set-up specifically for the initiative - such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
 - Word-of-mouth
 - Email invitation
 - Local newspaper story and/or advertisement
 - Announcements at meetings & gatherings that Task Force members are involved in or aware of, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, school assemblies, church meetings, various clubs, etc...
 - Radio announcement
- Formalize a Task Force Action Plan for reaching out and engaging community members** noting:
 - Tasks
 - Persons responsible
 - Target date

* **Identify people on the Task Force that have the skillset, interest or access to others who can:**

- Develop an eye-catching poster
- Create a smaller version poster to insert as email invite
- Produce an attention-grabbing radio announcement
- Arrange newspaper story coverage
- Get the forum mentioned along with other community event announcement
- Create social media platforms and begin posting information
- Coordinate 'save the date posts' on websites that note community events.

Develop the “key talking points” about the Community Forum, including:

1. A short & emotive introductory statement - for example: “I am connecting with you specifically about a social innovation project that is launching in our community – one that I know you'll be interested in & “get”. You've noticed that our community is growing & becoming more diverse - this is a good thing & this initiative is about our community getting it right!”
2. A short & clear description of the social innovation initiative, - for example: “The aim of the social innovation initiative is to establish our community as ‘A Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs.”
3. A plan for achieving your vision/initiative – for example, “Imagine this – when you arrive at a business or service in (our town/city) the first thing you will see on the door is a decal, one that was co-designed by our community, and one committing and symbolizing that our community is a place where every person is welcome and belongs.”
4. Invite the person to engage – “There are plans for the community to come together to learn about and provide input and insights into this innovative project. I think you have a lot to offer, and importantly, we all have something to gain from the project, too.”
5. Provide the Community Forum details – date, time, etc...

Coordinator follow-up and secure venue for Community Forum

Task Force implement the action plan

EXPERIENCE TIPS

- **Community Forum Location** - The Strathroy-Caradoc Committee intentionally chose a large, centrally located Senior's Centre as the location for the Community Forum. The centre was viewed as a neutral location as it has no religious or particular group affiliation, and many organizations use it to host events.
- **Transportation to & from Community Forum** - The Strathroy-Caradoc Committee also decided to arrange for a shuttle service to and from the Senior's Centre for residents wishing to attend from the Mount Brydges area, which is part of Strathroy-Caradoc municipality but a short drive away.
- **Radio Announcement** - MCL was offered a 30 second public service radio announcement spot on their community radio station. They created an advertisement that featured people with distinct voices that clearly represented a solid cross-section of their community, inviting people to come out and participate in the Community Forum.
- **Poster Design** - When designing the poster, best to garner the engagement of someone on the Task Force who either has a flair for this kind of thing or a connection to a someone who does – posters advertising events should be eye-catching & to the point.
- **Social Media Give-Aways** – MCL ran a fun promotion leading up to the Community Forum. They posted the invitation to the Community Forum on Facebook AND a photo of a gift basket, and every person that shared the invitation had their name entered in a draw to win the gift basket.



"THERE IS NO POWER FOR CHANGE
GREATER THAN A COMMUNITY
DISCOVERING WHAT IT CARES ABOUT."

- MARGARET J. WHEATLEY

STEP 4 – HOST INCLUSIVE & INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY FORUMS

Overview

Now you are ready to take step four, which is truly a big stride forward, as it involves preparing for and hosting an inclusive and interactive Community Forum. Forum goals include:

1. Exploring and defining what being **welcoming** and **having a sense of belonging** looks & feels like – these are the things/ that will help define what types of qualities and conditions need to be on display for a business or service to receive the decal, and
2. Gathering creative input into the **design** of the **Decal of Distinction** – the design should reflect the information that surfaced through the exploration activities.
3. Setting a target for the # of Decals of Distinction that will be on display in your community one-year from now.

Through the efforts of the Task Force and with participation of a diverse group of community members, you will also:

- Create wide-spread awareness to the broader social innovation initiative
- Generate enthusiasm for the initiative
- Garner more engagers and champions

STEP FOUR - HOST INCLUSIVE & INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY FORUMS - TASK CHECKLIST

The tasks noted below will help you both prepare for and host the community forum:

- Identify Who Will Fulfill Necessary Roles on Organizing & Facilitation Team.** You will need:
 - 1 Spokesperson from the Task Force to provide Opening Remarks & Closing Remarks
 - 1 Coordinator + helpers – To manage logistics and details ahead of & during forum
 - Greeters – To work the door & welcome community forum participants
 - Key Facilitator – To prepare activities & lead the facilitation at the forum
 - 6 to 8 Co-Facilitators – To run each activity with small groups simultaneously

- * Determine a Dress Code for the Organizing & Facilitation Team** – It is important that forum participants are able to recognize who is part of the organizing & facilitation team. A dress code, such as black pants and white shirt helps to identify who participants can approach with a question or for assistance.

- Design Room Set-up:** Ideally you will host the forum in a large room that:
 - Accommodates up to 100 people or more
 - Has some natural light
 - Room for a 'welcome & sign-in table' at entrance
 - A place to hang coats
 - A podium at the front where the spokesperson and facilitators can be seen & heard by participants
 - A microphone and sound system
 - Room for 6 – 8 long tables (3 or 4 tables situated on both sides of the room with 8 chairs at each)
 - A clear open space in the center of the room for the larger group activities
 - A stretch of wall where 10 – 15 feet of butcher paper can be taped/affixed to

- * Attendance Record** – You will want to ensure you have a record of who showed-up for the forum.



Name Tags – For everyone on the organizing and facilitation team, and all participants.



* **Welcome & Take-Away Gift** – If possible, provide attendees with a token of appreciation – a welcome gift – for volunteering their time to participate in the forum and contribute toward the overall well-being of the community. Strathroy-Caradoc gave every attendee a coffee mug with chocolates inside, and a thank-you note attached.



* **Two-Minute Measure Questionnaire** – The purpose of the questionnaire is for you to collect baseline data about how 'welcoming' community members view your community prior to the official launch of the decal component of the initiative. You will use the same questionnaire a year later to see if there has been a shift in answers, which would indicate whether a change, hopefully a positive one, happened as a result of the social innovation initiative.

Questions might include:

Q1: How 'welcoming' would you rate our community?

- Answer options: Extremely welcoming – Mostly welcoming – Somewhat welcoming – Unwelcoming

Q2: How would you rate your current "sense of belonging" in our community?

- Answer options: Very strong – Strong – Good – Okay – Weak

Q3: To what degree would you say our community is inclusive of all types of people?

- Answer options: Extremely – Mostly – Somewhat – Not inclusive

Q4: How diverse do you think our community is?

- Answer options: Very - Quite - Somewhat - Not diverse

Q5: How tolerant and accepting do you think our community is?

- Answer options: Extremely – Mostly – Somewhat – Not tolerant & accepting

Q6: What one word would you use to describe our community as it is today?

- Answer - *leave space for person to write their one word

Q7: Please indicate your age range.

- Answer options: Under 19 – In my 20s – 30s – 40s – 50s – 60s – 70s – 80+

ACTIVITIES

Activity #1 – Large Group Warm-up: “Where We’re Originally From”

Purpose: This activity provides attendees with an opportunity to visually get a sense of who is in the room and reinforces that every person/everyone's family at one time was new to your community, which sends a message about the importance of it being a welcoming place to everyone.

Instructions:

- Involve everyone in room (forum participants, co-facilitators, volunteers)
- Facilitation
 - One Key Facilitator provides instructions to everyone
- Space – Use an open area in middle of room
- Materials & Set-up – Large coloured construction paper/placards identifying the following continents & key countries around the world: Asia, East Europe, West Europe, Africa, North America, Central America, South America, Antarctica, Australia, Caribbean Islands. Place them on the floor or have co-facilitators hold them. Do your best to position them geographically, as if on a map of the world.
- Process
 - Ask people to identify one part of the world where they, or one or both of their parents, grand-parents, or great grand-parents came from, other than Canada, and to stand by the placard noting this part of the world
 - Facilitators ask the people to take a moment and introduce themselves to the other people in their group and share more specifically what part of that region their family came from
 - Facilitators speak briefly about how, at some point, all members of your community came here from elsewhere. With this in mind we can begin the task of exploring together what types of values and conditions would have made their family member feel welcomed and give them a sense of belonging, and how might we as a community strengthen these feelings for all community members now and moving forward.



Activity #2 – Two-Minute Measure

Purpose - The purpose of this activity is to gather baseline data about how welcoming & belonging participants view your community now, before the official launch of the decal of distinction initiative. Post launch data will be gathered one-year later to assist with measuring the impact of the project.

Instructions:

- Individual Activity
- Facilitation
 - 1 Key Facilitator to provide instructions to everyone
 - 8 Co-Facilitators – Handout hard-copies of one-page questionnaire to each forum
- Space – Tables & chairs are strategically located around room
- Materials - One-page questionnaire, one pen for each participant, one large envelope to put completed questionnaires in.
- Process
 - Each co-facilitator has 10 copies of the questionnaire and 10 pens to provide to participants
 - Participants are asked to take a seat at one of the side tables, complete the questionnaire & hold it up when it is complete & give to co-facilitator.
 - Co-facilitators put all completed questionnaires in the envelope and give to Coordinator.

Activity #3 - Define "Welcoming"

Purpose - Participants identify ways in which communities can demonstrate that they are welcoming.

Instructions:

- Small group activity
- Facilitation
 - 1 Key Facilitator to provide instructions to everyone
 - 6-8 Co-Facilitators - Each at a separate station located around the room & each using one distinct colour of marker for all activities with their group, ie, there will be a red group, green group, purple group, blue group, etc...
- Space - People stay in their same 6-8 smaller groups
- Materials - Prepared Flipchart Paper with question on it & Coloured Markers
- Process
 - All 6-8 co-facilitators work with their small groups to fill in the blank to the following statement:
"A Welcoming Community is one where _____."
 - The goal is to have each person complete the sentence once or twice with answers such as: "A welcoming community is one where people are kind"; "A welcoming community is one where there is a wide variety clubs that people can join."; "A welcoming community is one that has a Welcome Committee that formally welcomes new members into the community."
 - Co-facilitators can go first to provide an example and then ask who else has an example, and if the group is hesitant suggest a round-robin so everyone has a turn. Ideally everyone has the opportunity to provide two examples.
 - Co-facilitators write down answers on flipchart paper. The "fill in the blank sentence" is written on the top, followed by bullet points for each answer provided.
 - Co-facilitators hand in flipchart data to Coordinator

Activity #4 – Define ‘Belonging’

Purpose - Participants begin to identify people, places, and ways communities can “be” and things they can ‘do’ to give members a sense of belonging.

Instructions:

- Small group activity
- Facilitation
 - 1 Key Facilitator to provide instructions to everyone
 - 6-8 Co-Facilitators - Each at a separate station located around the room & each using one distinct colour of marker for all activities with their group, ie, there will be a red group, green group, purple group, blue group, etc...
- Space – People stay in their same 6-8 smaller groups
- Materials - Prepared Flipchart Paper with question on it & Coloured Markers
- Process
 - All 6-8 co-facilitators work with their small groups to fill in the blank to the following statement:
“I feel like I belong at [name of place] because [description of what it is that makes them feel comfortable/like they belong there].”
 - Co-facilitators can go first to provide an example, and then ask who else has an example, and if the group is hesitant suggest a round-robin so everyone has a turn. Ideally everyone has the opportunity to provide two examples.
 - Co-facilitators write down answers on flipchart paper. The “fill in the blank sentence” is written on the top, followed by 2 headings: “AT” & “BECAUSE”. Answers provided are noted under each corresponding heading
 - Co-facilitators hand in flipchart data to Coordinator

Activity #5 – WHO Makes Up Our Community

Purpose - Participants identify who makes up their community, which helps identify any individuals or groups that might get overlooked when fully launching the initiative, and it also gets participants thinking more broadly about who all makes up their community now and into the future.

Instructions:

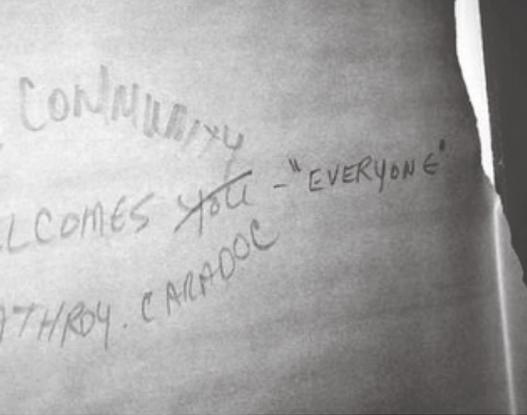
- Small group activity
- Facilitation
 - 1 Key Facilitator to provide instructions to everyone
 - 6-8 Co-Facilitators
- Space – People stay in their same 6-8 smaller groups
- Materials - Prepared Flipchart Paper & Coloured Markers
- Process
 - Each group is asked to identify as many groups of people as possible that make-up their community, in 5 minutes
 - Co-facilitator writes them on flipchart paper
 - The group with the longest list wins prizes
 - All flipchart sheets are handed in to facilitator
 - The idea here is to spread awareness of all the groups that make-up your community, and to assist with targeting engagement in the project after the forum
 - Co-facilitators hand-in flipchart data to Coordinator

Activity #6 – WHERE People Go In Our Community

Purpose - Participants identify the range of places that make-up your community, which will potentially bring attention to more people who should be informed about the initiative & minimize the risk of overlooking anyone.

Instructions -

- Small group activity
- Facilitation
 - 1 Key Facilitator to provide instructions to everyone
 - 6-8 Co-Facilitators
- Space – People stay in their same 6-8 smaller groups
- Materials - Prepared Flipchart Paper & Markers
- Process
 - Each group is tasked with identifying as many places as possible “where people go” in-person in their community in 5 minutes
 - The group with the longest list wins a prize
 - All flipchart sheets get handed in to Coordinator
 - The idea here is for targeting engagement in the project after the forum, ie, places that can work toward displaying a Decal of Distinction
 - Co-facilitators hand-in flipchart data to Coordinator



Activity #7 – Creative Corners

Purpose - Participants co-design a 'Decal of Distinction' that will be displayed by businesses and services in your community, identifying the place as one that welcomes everyone and makes them feel like they belong. Discussions and insights that surfaced during activities 1 through 6 should inspire some images to form.

Instructions:

- Free Range Activity
- Facilitation
 - 1 Key Facilitator to provide instructions to everyone
 - All Co-Facilitators on-hand to provide support & materials as needed
- Space – Everyone gathers along back wall where butcher paper is taped across the wall
- ✨ Materials - Colourful pens & other creative materials are laid-out on tables or in buckets for participants to get creative with and draw. Sticky DOTS are also needed at end of activity.
- ✨ Process
 - Participants will take pens in hand and doodle or draw & build-on other's ideas for the "Welcoming Community" Decal of Distinction
 - At the 10-minute mark, each participant is given 3 identically coloured sticky dots to weigh-in on their favourite Decals of Distinction once complete
 - Participants are encouraged to use their 3 dots however they like- all 3 dots can be used to mark one decal they REALLY like or they can spread their dots around to different ones they favour
 - Participants can also offer-up a name other than "Decal of Distinction" for consideration by Committee members following the forum

Activity #8 – Wrap-up & Closing Remarks

- **Spokesperson** provides Closing Remarks
 - **Offer Thank you** for your time, insights & contributions into this community-wide social innovation initiative.
- **Next Steps** involve:
 - **Task Force members** review all the ideas & input from the community forums today
 - **Use the information** to (i) decide on a Decal & (ii) identify some core qualities that businesses and services will demonstrate in order to display the decal.
 - **There will be other steps along the way** & further opportunities to get involved – be sure to note your name & contact information on the bottom of the feedback form
 - *** Inform participants that to win the door prize they must fill-in the Community Forum Feedback Form** – the last activity

Activity #9 – 1-page Feedback Form – Co-facilitators & volunteers hand out feedback forms to participants to complete.

Activity #10 – Large Group Activity - Draw for **Door Prize**



EXPERIENCE TIPS

- **Dress Code** - At the Strathroy-Caradoc Community Forum, everyone on the organizing & facilitation team wore black pants & white shirts, and they also wore bright blue aprons with the word "Welcome" stitched at the front & the apron also had a pocket, which was handy for carrying markers and other supplies
- **Attendance Sheet** - A suggested format for the attendance form includes a place for people to: (i) note their name, (ii) tick-off if they ✓ Work ✓ Live or ✓ Recreate in your community, (iii) and a space to include their email address, if they choose.
- **Two-Minute Measure** – Strathroy-Caradoc gathered data from 52 Community Forum participants, which provided good insight into people's perceptions of the current state of the community re: being welcoming & nurturing belonging.
- **Facilitation tips**
 - Listen actively
 - Print Clearly
 - Use Headlines – try to capture point in 1 or 2 words - avoid long answers or sentences
 - Ask for clarification where necessary
 - Do not edit people's words or ideas, unless they are struggling to find a word & you can help them to find the word(s)
 - Do not judge people's opinions
 - Where 1 or 2 people are doing most of the talking – suggest a 'round robin' to include everyone. Or, ask people who are quiet "Do you have anything you would like to add or build on?"
 - Where more ideas are needed or you have a quiet/shy group - pretend a "guest thinker" has joined your group, like Steve Jobs or Ellen DeGeneres, or a well know character from your local community. Ask the group what thoughts that person might have?
 - Be comfortable with some quiet space (up to 10 seconds) – give people time to think
 - Have post-it notes on the table and encourage participants to write down their ideas and hand them into the facilitator for inclusion with other ideas noted – this is appreciated by participants who are shy or reluctant to offer input verbally

- Encourage unconventional thinking & not holding back – big ideas are great & can always be scaled back- the idea is to generate as much input as possible
 - Each Co-Facilitator will use a Distinct Colour – Put multiple checkmarks by ideas that garner much group support & consensus – Put a BIG QUESTION MARK? where uncertainty is expressed about an idea
 - *In the rare instance that people experience conflicting ideas & there is tension in the air – move them along by stating everyone's views are welcome & for today we'll need to agree to disagree, & then move on
- At the creative corners consider posting some examples of existing decals/logos that are being used by other communities and services to depict that they are welcoming and inclusive. Do a google search for these & you are sure to find some in addition to Strathroy-Caradoc's
 - In addition to the 'Creative Corners' drawing station, the Strathroy-Caradoc Community Forum also had a "Speaker's Corner" where forum participants could volunteer to be video-taped speaking to "what a welcoming community where everyone belongs looks & feels like." The businessperson on the Steering Committee donated the Green Screen Video Station and edited the video to be used as part of the launch and promotion of the initiative
 - The Strathroy-Caradoc Committee reached out to a professional photographer and journalist from the local newspaper who was invited to cover the community forum – she actively engaged in both forums and took the photos included in the toolkit
 - The businessperson on the Steering Committee set-up live streaming technology at both forums and it ran on Facebook throughout both sessions
 - Consider sourcing out a decent door prize through one of your Task Force members or Community Connections and advertise the prize in advance through social media shout-outs to both garner engagement and provide promotion for the business or service that provided the prize



"PROTOTYPING IS THE
CONVERSATION YOU HAVE WITH
YOUR IDEAS."

- TOM WUJEC

STEP 5 - DEVELOP YOUR COMMUNITY'S IDEAS INTO A PROTOTYPE

Overview

You are now at the 5th step of the social innovation process – this is when all of your hard work begins to take shape – something like the stage of an artist's painting when objects become recognizable and the colours and lines come together to form a picture.

In your case, you will closely review all of the information gathered at the Community Forum, identify the themes that emerged through the small and large group activities, and work with the drawings and concepts shared at the Creative Corners – all for the purpose of developing a prototype of (a) the decal of distinction, and (b) the qualities and conditions that need to be present to display a decal at a place of business or service in your community.

STEP FIVE - DEVELOP YOUR COMMUNITY'S IDEAS INTO A PROTOTYPE - TASK CHECKLIST

- * **Assign 1 Person to Analyze Information Gathered at Both Community Forum Sessions** – This person should be someone who is on the Task Force or who facilitated or played another role at the Community Forum. Ideally the person has some experience doing action research.
- * **Analyze the Data & Theme Key Findings** – Information from each of the following Community Forum activities needs to be analyzed & themed:
 - Attendance Record
 - Activity 2 – Two-Minute Measure
 - Activity 3 – Define “Welcoming”
 - Activity 4 – Define “Belonging”
 - Activity 5 – WHO Makes-up Our Community
 - Activity 6 – WHERE People Go in Our Community
 - Activity 7 – Creative Corners
 - Activity 9 – Feedback
- * **Write Community Forum Report for Review by Task Force** – Identify in the Community Forum Report:
 - Summary of the # of people who attended each forum and the total #, including #s of people that work in, live in &/or visit your community
 - Summary of the data for each question in the two-minute measure questionnaire
 - Summary of themes re: qualities & conditions that surfaced most when describing “welcoming”
 - Summary of themes re: qualities & conditions that surfaced most when describing “belonging”
 - *List of the different groups of people WHO were noted as making-up your community now and looking forward
 - *List of all the places noted re: WHERE people go in the community
 - From the Creative Corners images, choose the top 3 - 5 images that have the most dot votes and cut those images out of the strip of butcher paper to present back to the Task Force members at your next meeting
 - Compile the data gathered on the feedback form, importantly highlighting any contact information provided by people who wish to be further involved
 - SUMMARIZE (a) what types of images & colours for a decal received the most votes & (b) which qualities and conditions surfaced the most to describe a community where everyone is welcome and feels like they belong.

- * **Task Force Meet to Review Community Forum Report & Begin Working on Prototype of Decal of Distinction** – Based on information provided in the report, the Task Force will (a) choose images and colours that will be used to design a few decals of distinction to choose from, and (b) come to consensus on the core qualities and conditions that will be the official descriptors of 'welcoming' and 'belonging' in your community's social innovation initiative
- * **Reach out to Graphic Artist to Create Mock-ups of Decals** – Have a professional graphic artist design two or three decals of distinction, based on the most popular images and colours
- Choose a Decal Design** – Use social media, such as your project's Facebook page, to ask members of your community for feedback on which decal prototype they prefer. Have Task Force members weigh-in on their preferences and take into consideration social media feedback when making a final decision on decal design.
- * **Breakdown the Core Qualities & Conditions into Specific Criteria** – This involves one person going back to the themes from the community forum and doing some additional on-line research to further breakdown qualities and conditions, such as "accessible" into actual things and behaviours that are demonstrated at the place of business or service looking to display the decal of distinction.
 - **Important** -The Task Force will also need to determine how many of the qualities need to be demonstrated at the place of business or service to receive a Decal of Distinction. Strathroy-Caradoc Steering Committee chose 1 criteria under each of the 5 qualities – as it was determined that the aim of the initiative is to get as many businesses and services to ENGAGE in the initiative as possible, and that it is not meant to be a test or accreditation like process, rather one of awareness and encouraging positive social change. See helpful hint for examples
- * **Finalize Decal of Distinction & Criteria and Share with Community** – Use various methods to share the prototypes of the Decal of Distinction and Criteria with community members that attended the forums and for whom you have contact information, as well as other contacts. Put a post on your social media platforms, such as Facebook & Instagram and direct people to go there to see them and to stay tuned for the official launch – this is your next step!

EXPERIENCE TIPS

- Strathroy-Caradoc had PMB analyze the data, as the consultant has expertise in the area of action research, and there was a significant amount of information collected
- A Community Forum Report was written by PMB and presented to the Strathroy-Caradoc Steering Committee at a meeting within 10 days of the forum, while information was fresh and to keep the initiative moving forward at a good momentum
- When listing WHO belongs in your community, best to note all the groups included on each list, in alphabetical order. Where there are repeats, just include the group once
- When listing WHERE people go in your community, best to note all the places included on each list, in alphabetical order. Where there are repeats, just include the place once
- Strathroy-Caradoc Steering Committee members were provided with 9 different qualities that surfaced to describe welcoming & belonging. They determined where there were similarities and after some discussion, landed on these five:
 - Accessible
 - Compassionate
 - Friendly
 - Helpful
 - Safe
- PMB was asked to identify the specific criteria that the Strathroy-Caradoc Steering Committee members would review, edit and agreed upon. Here are the finalized qualities and criteria:
 - **Accessible**
 - Place of business or service is physically accessible to all people
 - Employees, & volunteers where applicable, receive training on having a welcoming attitude – one that is open to all people
 - Information is provided to customers & visitors in a variety of formats, for example, using words & photos, etc ...
 - **Compassionate**
 - Employment or volunteer opportunities are provided to a wide variety of people, including some that may require adaptations to the workplace or other accommodations

- A kind & caring approach is extended to all customers & visitors - everyone matters
- Efforts are made to intentionally support the success of other local people, services, businesses, clubs, etc...
- **Friendly**
 - Visitors & customers are acknowledged with a smile, a wave, a nod, or handshake
 - Good listening & friendly responsive action is what you can expect here
 - Efforts are made to thank all customers and visitors for coming in
- **Helpful**
 - TIME is contributed to support local people & initiatives
 - TALENTS & skills are contributed to support local people & initiatives
 - TREASURES - funds or things - are contributed to support local people & initiatives
- **Safe**
 - The physical space is clean & clutter-free to reduce harm, hazards, or accidents
 - Personal privacy is respected both during in-person & on-line interactions
 - The place is well lit

**The finalized Strathroy-Caradoc Decal of Distinction,
noting the 5 core qualities:**





"PEOPLE SUPPORT WHAT THEY
CREATE."

- DALE CARNEGIE

STEP 6 – OFFICIALLY LAUNCH 'WELCOMING COMMUNITY SOCIAL INNOVATION INITIATIVE,' BUILD MOMENTUM & EMBED IN COMMUNITY

Overview

You have your Decal of Distinction & now it's time to take step six, which involves preparing to and officially launching your social innovation initiative in a way that heightens awareness, garners engagement, builds momentum, and establishes your community as one where everyone is welcome and belongs. Accomplishing this will involve strategy, continued work with your connections in the community, and a commitment to build and sustain positive momentum now and well into the future.

STEP SIX - OFFICIALLY LAUNCH

‘WELCOMING COMMUNITY SOCIAL INNOVATION INITIATIVE,’ BUILD MOMENTUM & EMBED IN COMMUNITY - TASK CHECKLIST

A. Preparing for & Hosting the Launch Event

- * Strategize & Determine the Right Time and Place to Officially Launch the Welcome Community (Decal) Social Innovation Initiative** – Task Force members will need to determine when and where to launch the initiative community-wide. One strategy might be to piggyback on an existing and well attended community event that is happening soon, or create your own event solely focused on the launch.
- Determine Event Logistics re: Hosting the Launch** – location, date, time
- Promote the Launch with a Focus on How Participating Businesses & Services will Benefit from Attending the Event & Getting Involved.** Inform the community via:
 - Word-of-Mouth
 - Social Media
 - Posters
 - Radio Announcement
 - E-mail – include everyone who provided their email addresses on Community Forum feedback forms
 - Announcements at existing groups events
 - Websites
 - Other...
- * Prepare Promotional & Take-away Materials About the Initiative, such as:**
 - * A Standing Banner with Decal logo & criteria noted
 - * Placemats or drink coasters with decal logo as prominent part of design
 - * Decal of Distinction application form to complete at the event & hand-in or take-away and submit later
- * Use Launch Event as Another Opportunity to Gather Two-Minute Measure Pre-launch Data** – Have participants at the Launch event complete the same two-minute measure questionnaire that attendees at the Community Forum did.

Assign Spokesperson & Prepare Opening Comments – You will want your opening remarks to be brief but powerful – this is your opportunity to garner engagement. Enthusiasm is key.

*** Use Images to Excite the Crowd** – Share photos in a slide deck and/or show video from the Community Forum to get people's attention – they are sure to recognize some faces, and visuals demonstrate that the 'Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative' is one that your community is co-creating together & people are more apt to engage in what they help create. Send the message that the initiative requires their support and involvement to become a success.

Prepare Closing Statement with a Clear Call-to-Action – When preparing your wrap-up remarks, be sure to provide attendees with an invitation to apply for their Decal of Distinction and clear instructions on the easy process for doing so. Highlight the incentives for taking action:

- To contribute toward creating a 'Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs'
- To receive public acknowledgement and promotion for being a business/service that demonstrates the qualities of a welcoming environment
- To be a part of a positive movement and be a positive influencer in your local community

B. Building Momentum & Embedding in Community

Immediately Begin Distributing Decals of Distinction – You want to get them on display on as many doors as possible to generate buzz and interest

Have All Task Force Members Take Turns Distributing Decals – Share this responsibility among everyone on the Task Force – it is fun and it demonstrates that this is a community-wide initiative that does not belong to one agency, business or service, and it spreads the time commitment among many not a few people

*** Include Additional Attention Grabbing Visuals** – Give some thought to other, larger visuals in addition to the door decal, that can be used at the time of distributing the decal, for example, have a large sign with decal logo made and have the people from the business and service hold the sign, take a photo and then post on social media

*** Use Various Strategies to Build Momentum & Embed in Community** – Consider:

- hosting a booth at community events to promote the initiative, and have decal application forms available and give-away promotional material
- Taking short video clips while distributing decals that capture proprietors and/or employees and customers speaking to the ways this establishment appreciates and demonstrates their support for being a community where everyone feels welcome and belongs
- Approach the local media outlets – print & radio – to explore possibilities such as monthly features of businesses and services that have been awarded decals
- Keep social media content flowing and up-to-date, give many 'shout-outs,' and use many photos to capture everyone in the community who is getting involved in your initiative

Begin Making Arrangements for a Celebratory Follow-up Event One-Year After the Launch

EXPERIENCE TIPS

A. Preparing for & Hosting the Launch Event

- **Location** - Strathroy-Caradoc launched their initiative at an annual Mayor's Breakfast event held about one month after the decal and quality criteria had been formalized. The Mayor, a strong supporter of the initiative, was pleased to make this the focus of the 2019 Breakfast event
- **Paper Placemats** - Strathroy-Caradoc designed placemats for the Mayor's Breakfast that included the Decal and Criteria, as seen on the next page, p.40.
- **Hashtag** - The hashtag #EveryoneBelongs came to fruition during a Steering Committee meeting and is prominent on all promotional materials
- **Standing Banner** - Strathroy-Caradoc also had a promotional standing banner, as seen on p. 41, made that they placed at the front of the room at the Mayor's Breakfast and would use again and again when promoting the initiative at a variety of community events
- **Decal of Distinction Application** - Strathroy-Caradoc created an 11cm by 28cm take-away application form on card stock that had the same design as the standing banner on the front and the following application text and questions on the back:
 - Are you ready to Join the Welcome Community Movement in Strathroy-Caradoc?
 - We Want to Honour You with a Decal of Distinction!
 - Meet One Criteria from Each Category & Fill-out the Form Below to Have Yours Delivered.
 - Business Name:
 - Contact Name:
 - Address:
 - Phone#:
 - Email:
 - Best Time of Day to Deliver Your Decal of Distinction:
- **Two-Minute Measure** - An additional 86 questionnaires were completed at the Launch event, giving Strathroy-Caradoc a total of 138 pre-launch measures from which to gauge the current state and compare to the future state, one year later at the Mayor's Breakfast event.
- **Pre-launch Engagement Strategy** - You might consider approaching some key influencers in your community before the launch and explore with them the opportunity to be among the first businesses/services to display the decal, and get mention in the opening remarks at the launch - this might spur on engagement from other business owners/service managers who will be in attendance.

✓ ACCESSIBLE

- Place of business or service is physically accessible to all people
- Employees, & volunteers receive training on having a welcoming attitude – one that is open to all people
- Information is provided to customers & visitors in a variety of formats, for example, using words & photos, etc. ...

✓ COMPASSIONATE

- Employment or volunteer opportunities are provided to a wide variety of people, including some that may require adaptations to the workplace or other accommodations
- A kind & caring approach is extended to all customers & visitors - everyone matters
- Efforts are made to intentionally support the success of other local people, services, businesses, clubs, etc. ...

✓ FRIENDLY

- Visitors & customers are acknowledged with a smile, a wave, a nod, or handshake
- Good listening & friendly responsive action is what you can expect here
- Efforts are made to thank all customers and visitors for coming in

✓ HELPFUL

- TIME is contributed to support local people & initiatives
- TALENTS & skills are contributed to support local people & initiatives
- TREASURES - funds or things - are contributed to support local people & initiatives

✓ SAFE

- The physical space is clean & clutter-free to reduce harm, hazards, or accidents
- Personal privacy is respected both during in-person & on-line interactions
- The place is well lit



#EVERYONEBELONGS



ACCESSIBLE

COMPASSIONATE

FRIENDLY

HELPFUL

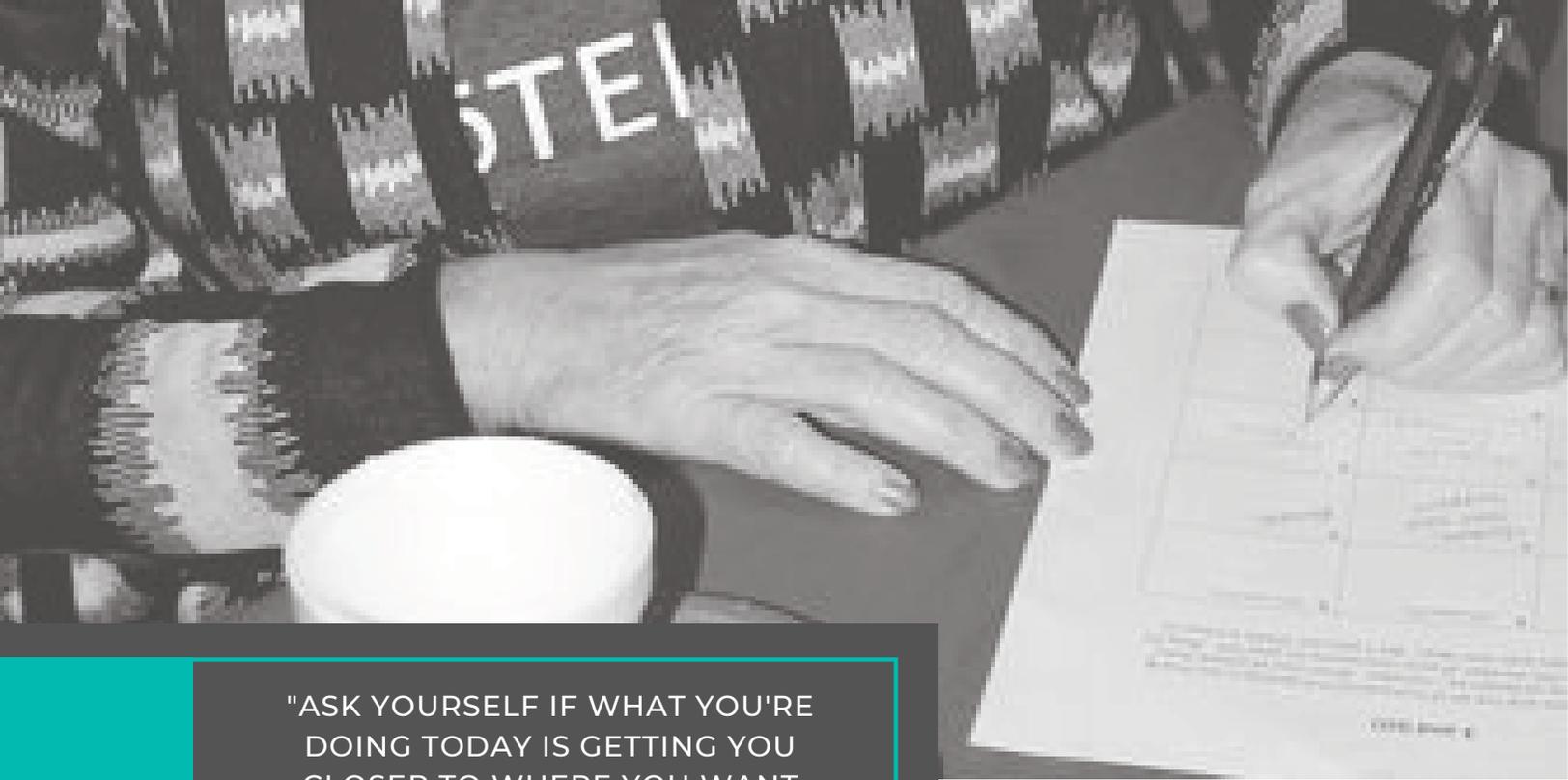
SAFE

- **Video** - Strathroy-Caradoc showed the speaker's corner video at the Mayor's Breakfast launch event. They had the Mayor do a short video segment that was added to the end of the video where she spoke to the importance of creating a community where everyone who works, lives or visits feels welcome and like they belong, and she finished with a strong endorsement of the initiative.

B) Building Momentum & Embedding in Community

- **Attention Grabbing Visuals** - Here you see the large attention grabbing sign that business owners and service managers hold when being given their decal. The woman is a member of the Strathroy-Caradoc Steering Committee and the man is the business owner.





"ASK YOURSELF IF WHAT YOU'RE DOING TODAY IS GETTING YOU CLOSER TO WHERE YOU WANT TO BE TOMORROW"

STEP 7 – EVALUATE SOCIAL INNOVATION INITIATIVE

Overview

Success is something that can be measured, which is the focus of Step 7 – evaluating the social innovation initiative. Because the intention is to run the initiative for an indefinite amount of time, the type of evaluation you will engage in is 'developmental'. This is real-time evaluation based on feedback with a focus on tracking developments, identifying what is working well and surfacing issues to address. Importantly, identifying the types of impact the initiative is having on the people who live, work and visit your community is key to success.

You will want to determine some evaluation methods from the start, such as the pre 2-Minute Measure, and begin monitoring what is working and not working early-on. Once the initiative has been in operation for a selected period of time, likely 12 months, you'll apply your post 2-Minute Measure, gather stories and report on success and learning.

STEP SEVEN - EVALUATE SOCIAL INNOVATION INITIATIVE - TASK CHECKLIST

- * Identify the Data You Will Collect** – The Task Force will need to meet to confirm the data to be collected and by whom, such as:
 - The data from the pre & post launch questionnaire for the purpose of identifying if the answers to the questions have shifted since the launch and in what direction – for better or worse
 - The number of decals that have been distributed
 - The breakdown on the # of businesses vs. # of services that have the decal on display
 - The types of messages people are sharing about the initiative via video clips
 - Individual stories about specific people's experiences that capture the impact of the social innovation initiative
 - * Other sources of evidence that your community is becoming established as one where people feel welcome and belong

- Gather and Analyze the Data** – The numerical and non-numerical data will help with determining what is working well, where you might want to make changes, and provide proof that the initiative is, or possibly isn't, having a positive impact on your community

- * Report on and Share Evaluation Data** – Capture the highlights from the data and share with the Task Force. The Task Force can then determine the ways in which to share the results with your community, for example, via:
 - An engaging presentation with visuals at the end of year one/ 2nd Initiative Event
 - Social media
 - News story
 - One-page infographic at all participating businesses & services
 - Websites
 - Special announcements at other community events
 - * Submit proposals to present on the process and outcomes of the Welcome Community Social Innovation Initiative at conferences

EXPERIENCE TIPS

- PMB consultants worked with the Strathroy-Caradoc Steering Committee to determine evaluation methods early on in the process, and the Coordinator ensured data was gathered, and she assisted with collecting and collating data
- Organizations are encouraged to use pre and post measurement whenever possible for demonstrating impact
- The Initiative Lead, Middlesex Community Living's Executive Director, presented at a conference as a way to share results and encourage other communities to follow the pathway toward becoming a Welcoming Community
- The 'Keeping it Local' magazine wrote a feature story about the initiative.
- During Strathroy-Caradoc's first year of running the initiative, a "Hockey Night in Canada" segment was taped in the town. The well-known television host, Don McLean, commented at the top of the segment that he was reporting from "Strathroy-Caradoc, the town that is known for being a "place where everyone belongs." – This comment is a significant measure of success, as it validates that the social innovation initiative has taken hold and met its goal:

*Through this initiative,
the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc will establish that it is
'A Welcoming Community Where Everyone Belongs.'*



"TODAY'S INNOVATION IS
TOMORROW'S EXPECTATION"
- JANEEN & JENNIFER, PEOPLE MINDED BUSINESS INC.

STEP 8 – REACH OUT & SCALE OUT

Overview

Congratulations, you have arrived at Step 8 of the process! It is time to share, grow, and spread your ideas, processes, and impact beyond your border. It is time to reach out and scale out. It is time to invite other like-minded and good-spirited communities to join you in this social innovation effort. And just imagine, overtime, everyone who lives, works, or visits our community, your community, and many more communities will feel equally welcome and that they belong. This is the thrust of social innovation - it creates positive societal change that eventually becomes our way of being.

Thank you for joining us in this movement.

STEP EIGHT - REACH OUT & SCALE OUT - TASK CHECKLIST

- * **Explore ways in which you might expand the reach of this social innovation initiative.** Task Force members consider:
 - What other communities do we know of that are ripe for taking this initiative on?
 - What other municipalities do we know that might benefit most from focusing on creating a welcoming community?
 - How might we engage with these communities to promote engagement?

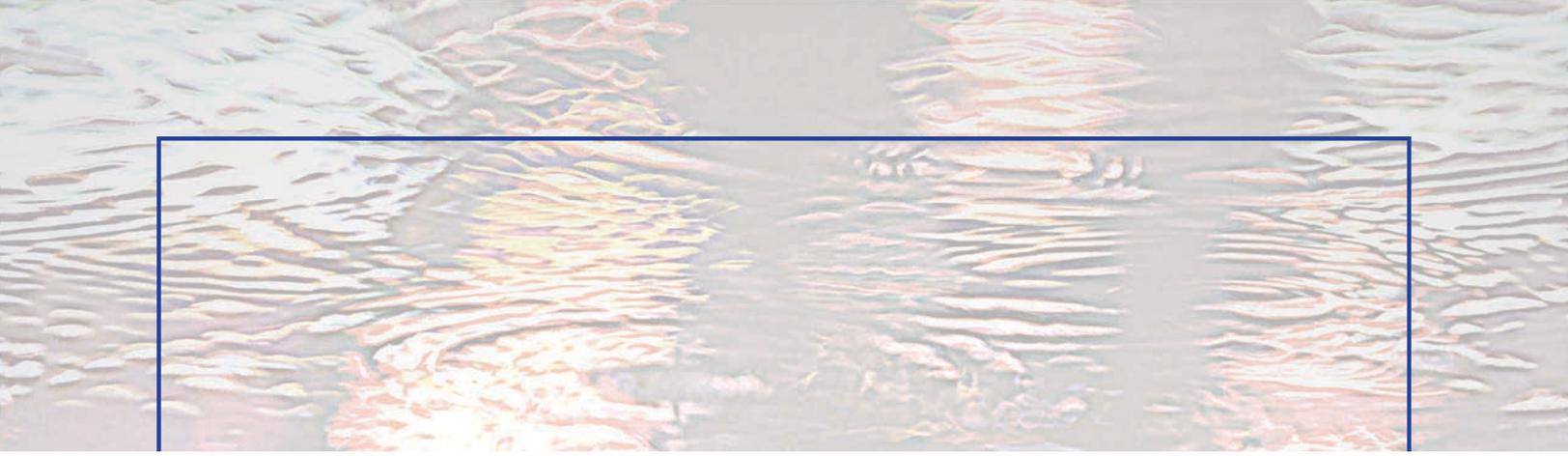
- Take action – reach out and scale out – continue to create positive change.

EXPERIENCE TIPS

- Strathroy-Caradoc took the approach of “tagging” another like-sized and like-minded community living agency – Community Living Hunstville (CLH) – as a way to keep the momentum going and spread the reach of the ‘Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative’.

MCL's Executive Director approached the CLH Executive Director who in turn discussed the initiative with her Board of Directors, who determined they were ready and willing to take on the challenge, and the risks associated with spearheading a community-wide initiative. The tagging of CLH happened at the annual Community Living Conference among an audience of many similar, curious agency representatives. As a result, many have since been in touch with MCL's Executive Director, requesting a toolkit to assist them in their process.

This toolkit was developed in response to their need.



RIPPLE EFFECTS

Ripple effects are things that happen which are unplanned for – they are spreading effects caused by one action. We are happy to share some ripple effects of the Strathroy-Caradoc Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative.

- During one Strathroy-Caradoc community forum a suggestion was made that Strathroy-Caradoc's Mayor begin sending 'welcome letters' to everyone who moves into the community. Now, every newcomer to the town receives a personalized letter from the Mayor expressing her and the municipality's, delight in having them as part of the community.
- Two teenage girls that attended a community forum learned about a provincial teen event that is hosted by Community Living Ontario. They expressed interest in attending and received sponsorship to do so with the assistance of MCL's Executive Director.
- The General Manager of the Business Improvement Area (BIA) informed MCL that the BIA is actively looking at portable ramp solutions for local businesses as a result of the social innovation initiative.
- Two employment opportunities for people supported through MCL have been attributed to the social innovation initiative.
- People supported by MCL received invitations to fill the roles of ambassadors and greeters at the municipality downtown market, and Victorian Christmas event.

A number of other initiatives with a social focus have since begun in Strathroy-Caradoc. While many people partly attribute the creation of these projects to the Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative, what is most important is that they have begun and that they too will have ripple effects.

WORDS OF RECOGNITION

If you have made it this far in the toolkit, you are likely well on your way to establishing your community as one where everyone feels welcome and belongs. We congratulate you on your efforts, learning and accomplishments, and we encourage you to share your successes with other like-minded and good-spirited communities.

Our final words are not ours, but belong to a strong-willed woman, who would certainly understand, appreciate and support the Welcoming Community Social Innovation Initiative:

"Alone, we can do so little; together we can do so much."

- Helen Keller



