



Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force: Shaping a place where we live A Grey Bruce Conversation Facilitated by Jill Umbach

8 August 2014

Introduction (Jill Umbach)

As a group of stakeholders we identified a problem we wanted to solve. We came together as a group and identified more problems to solve. We needed more viewpoints so we created the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force. We needed validation that we were moving in the right direction so we created the Community Voices group. We needed to delve deeper into problems and find solutions so we created four Action Groups. Each person that identifies as a stakeholder, Poverty Task Force member, Community Voices or Action Group member contributes to our “community of change”.

Today we want to focus on the spark, the passion and the energy that fuels you to be part of a ‘community of change’. Today is not as much about our jobs, but who we are as people. What we do in our personal lives to improve our lives and community. It is important to recognize ourselves as group that has come together because we like to make change. We are going to validate that we are having an impact and identify that there is a lot more work to do.

1000 conversations partnership with Tamarack (Jason Wepler)

Tamarack is engaging in national change across the country. Delbourne, Alberta has had many successes with this process. This conversation today is one of many being held across Grey and Bruce Counties. Consider as you go through the process, if you think of other groups who may benefit from this activity, if you could expand our reach to include them in these conversations and to have their voices and perspectives heard. Please contact Jill Umbach or Jason Wepler.

21 people (see attached list) were invited to break into 3 geographic-based groups representing their communities. The summary of their conversations are noted per group and summarized.

OS: Owen Sound-Meaford

Front Porch: Hanover-Elmwood

North of 21: Saugeen Shores-Cape Crocker-Georgian Bluffs



We asked ourselves:

What kind of community do you want to live in?
Why is that important to you?
How is that different from how you see things now?
What are some of the things that need to happen to create your vision of community?

Change makers:

A Photo booth was set up for people to be photographed as Changemakers. People were invited to do individual or group boards. 5 group boards emerged: Owen Sound, Front Porch (Hanover), North of 21, Community Voices and Public Health. People decorated these boards to reflect their group and to identify themselves in the group reporting back to the larger group.

The key findings and patterns discussed by the group are as follows:

How does the group describe powerful experiences of community?

Drawing materials were made available to all participants – coloured paper, markers, etc. All 3 groups felt more comfortable describing concepts/ideas in words rather than drawing a vision.

All 3 groups focused on community/neighbourhood relationships and did not focus on the built environment i.e. schools, parks, pathways.

All 3 groups focused on ways to improve mutual trust-communication amongst neighbours i.e. envisioning a neighbourhood where you can talk to your neighbours.

All 3 groups talked about the changing social and economic challenges to their community and how it affects how people feel about their communities. Out migration and in-migration has brought positive and negative changes.

What are some of the benefits to community that the group mentioned?

Resilience	Connectivity to families
Sense of equity	Strong community
Safety	Protection – young to old
Sense of belonging	Diversity

What are some of the challenges to community that the group mentioned?

Changing economic dynamics in communities are affecting how people feel about their communities.

- Youth are leaving for school and not returning until after retirement
- Young families are leaving for job opportunities and not returning
- Wealthy retirees are moving into Township of Blue Mountain and changing the local community dynamics.
- Inequality is increasing in communities
- Backyard style built neighbourhoods are not enhancing communities' sense of trust and mutual respect.
- Creation of economic ghettos increases stigma for low-income people and reduces levels of cooperation/support for community efforts

What did the group share as the job or purpose of community?

To provide a sense of belonging, mutual respect and support, safety, healthy well-being throughout the different phases of one's life: as a child, youth, parent and senior.

What common themes emerged from the visioning exercise?

- Diversity can spark resilience/innovations - how do we build resilient communities?
- How do we create communities without rallying around a negative crisis?
- More equality (everyone gets some) and equity (everyone gets wants) within communities
- Child and youth friendly communities with a sense of thriving

What are the ideas and themes that stood out for people?

Front porch vs backyard neighbourhoods. Our neighbourhoods were not designed to get to know your neighbours. They drive in their garages and never meet their neighbours. How do we have more conversations within neighbourhoods of towns?

- Identify 8-10 quadrants within a city and hold community conversations
- Host council meetings in neighbourhoods
- Bridge the gap between government and citizens more often
- Design and re-design neighbourhoods to engage each other more
- Create more hubs of interaction

1000 conversations

- Create more free activities that engage neighbours within neighbourhoods.
- Build trust from your front porch. Get to know your neighbours, learn about their struggles and build up relationships and trust.

Further notes from group discussions:

East Grey – (Owen Sound + Thornbury + Meaford)

What kind of community do you want to live?



I want to live in a respectful and peaceful community. Respect for all people. A mix of ethnicity, socio-economic classes, integrated neighbourhood. Owen Sound doesn't want to be the regional ghetto. Want to have a lot of choice.

Where I know my neighbours by name. Can walk or cycle to get my basics. Opportunities for people of all ages, not that we are hemorrhaging our youth. Yes go to university but create a community where they will come back at 27 not 57. Different spiritual, ethnic backgrounds. Respect for environment and the arts – this creates economic opportunities – blue sky

A neighbourhood, where you can talk to your neighbours. That I can walk after dark, no shoes hanging from the electric wires showing where you

can buy drugs. My kid can climb a tree, dig for rocks without people yelling at him

- Safe = Freedom
- More child friendly & Seniors (0-100)
- Knowing your neighbours by name
- Respect for diversity – it's exciting, we don't stagnate. It makes life and the conversation, food and fashion more interesting. Active learning. "can I offer halal chickens"
 - Yes it enriches us; we are in a position of privilege. The other side of diversity. It demonstrates respect acceptance for all of us with our differences
- Respectful, open sharing of ideas
- We have gardens, all kinds of things
- Fun events

How is that different from how you see things now?

Thornbury - Why I'm not comfortable in my community: it has changed so much. It's not welcoming. We have part time residents. They are not invested. Uber-wealth. It's so awkward and difficult. The people who have roots don't feel connected. The people who have lived there for decades are moving out. They're banking on selling their homes to city people, or they're staying and angry at city people. They have big cars, big dogs and

jewels. It's not a continuum. There are those with wealth and the have nots. It's awkward. I can't wait to get out.

- They're not invested. They're not participating. They're throwing money
- You don't want a community that is split; you want a community that is cohesive.

Meaford- there is an element, she has diamonds on her hands, her vision will be more around culture, "the thing" to do. People resent you because they go to school, shop, do activities in Owen Sound. All the resources are going to Owen Sound. Want to bring people together; unless we come together somehow, the taxes are just going to go up. Owen Sound is the hub.

People coming to Owen Sound and are not respecting the neighbourhood. Just coming to Wal-Mart and just passing through. I live in a supposed mixed community, but people know who is paying rent and who is subsidized. I want to do things together, but no one wants to mix.

It seems to be a crisis makes a community. What is it that will bring people together?

I like this process for community, there will always be problems. So long as we value reflection and inclusion. If we adopt this as a practice, the rest will happen. Like a marriage, if it splits and people can talk, it can be repaired.

Mono-culture versus diverse – the diverse one is going to thrive

Diversity can sparks Resilience innovation

Fracture is a tremendous word, a crisis being binding. If we can think about what the fractures are we can do something about them.

Many communities are undergoing unprecedented change. There is an old guard and mid-50s were looked at as the younger population. The kids are taking over a little bit, there's tension in that, how that tension is managed is really important. The change is what is different. This community was raised on PPG and Transcontinental. We're almost out of that, there's still that tension of "who are we". We're in an identity crisis, we are shifting. What is our modern sense of community?

When you're lacking your source of identity, you have to be careful of that identity; we're losing our Canadian identity. Truly the First People are the true Canadian identity. We do not need to be intimidated by the arrival of newcomers.

Change adverse people are wired to be change adverse. How to make people who are change averse to feel more secure – "we are going to support you through this process, not something to do to you".

We have an independent pioneering attitude, this has helped the community, they don't like people putting their fingers in.

Our neighbourhoods were not designed to get to know your neighbours. They drive in their garages and never meet their neighbours.

What are some of the things that need to happen to create your vision of community?

1. More effective support for people who are underrepresented e.g. new Canadians
2. Accessibility
3. Accessibility for people with limitations
4. Knowing what 211 is
5. Communication about what is out there, navigation, like 211, live, face to face
6. More conversations
7. Conversations within neighbourhoods. Identify 8-10 quadrants within the city
8. Hosting council meetings in neighbourhoods – this is really important as we change – we move around e.g. curling club, community meeting places, church basements – just need 4 more votes. We have to function as council – but it brings the opportunity for people to come – they can record it and play it later, schools—bridging the gap between government and citizens
9. “Shout outs” – free events, posters bringing people together e.g. Salmon Spectacular not everyone has a computer; while the mess of posters on telephone polls may not please everyone in a neighbourhood, people would see them.
10. The more diverse a community is the smaller it gets
11. Hub-ins – events with people in that neighbourhood, with a leadership/facilitator component – maybe a council member.
12. Free events when the bus is available
13. Collaboration stretching of our “mandates” fewer silos
14. Diversity – there is no one answer

Group Participants

Barb Fedy, Thornbury
Deborah Young, Meaford
Monica Banz, Owen Sound
Zana Strange, Owen Sound
Francesca Dobbyn, Owen Sound
Deb Haswell, Owen Sound
Francis McEwen, Owen Sound
Philly Markowitz, Owen Sound
Laura Needham, Owen Sound
Holly Devlin, Owen Sound

Group 2: North of 21 (Port Elgin+ Georgian Bluffs+ Cape Croker)

What kind of community do you want to live in?



Having a more respectful, compassionate, equitable community, primarily through public education

Connected – physically and socially
Rally around a cause i.e. family loss
Sense of community begins at a young age
Community – different life stages (hockey, dance, etc.)
Location vs Concept

Common Values: Mutual respect, Growth, Compassion, Acceptance, Supportive, Equitable/equal (less discrepancy between gaps), Safe, Healthy
“everyone lives well”
Relationships based on mutual respect
Removal of attitude that a hierarchy exists
Economic cooperation i.e Hanover & Durham

Why is that important to you?

Need for sense of equity

How is that different from how you see things now?

There are a lot of “them versus us” around poor people

Could we look at this as an issue of scarcity of something? For some people it is a scarcity of money. Sometimes actions may not always make sense to others.

- High rate of “working age poverty”
- Shift away from manufacturing

More equality (everyone gets some)/equity (everyone gets wants) & balanced

- Sense of hierarchy
- Lack of compassion – “judgmental”
- High prominence of food banks, community dinners, predatory businesses = economic community is shifting

What are some of the things that need to happen to create your vision of community?

1. Need to look around your community to make change
2. Groups come together and playing a role to make change (partnership & collaboration)
3. Need to see a need within a community
4. Educate people about poverty – what it really is & illustrate the impact
5. Legislation about a 'living wage'

Group Participants

Mary Jane Murray, Georgian Bluffs
Kim Wideman, Georgian Bluffs
Alice McLaren, Saugeen Shores (Port Elgin)
Joyce Scammell, Saugeen Shores (Southampton)
Dana Earley, Kincardine
David McLaren, Cape Croker

Group 3: Front Porch (Hanover-Elmwood)

What kind of community do you want to live in?



Child & Youth Friendly

Thriving, economically – attract jobs – attract young people back

- Affordable, local, safe food
- Variety of affordable, safe housing
- Good education system for students
- Transportation system
- Mixed land use
- Access to post-secondary education
- Green space
- Diverse, culturally and economically diverse

A caring community

- An involved community – child safety – lack of trust – building relationships with neighbours to watch our kids
- Values citizenship
- Front porch vs backyard communities
- Wash dirty laundry in public
- Inclusive

Why is that important to you?

- Resilience
- Safety
- Sense of belonging
- Protection – young to old

- Strong community
- Connectivity to families

How is that different from how you see things now?

- Now we are seeing locked doors
- Backyard living
- No one looking out for you or your children – no public responsibility
- Jobs scarcity
- Out migration
- Youth move out and away

What are some of the things that need to happen to create your vision of community?

1. Get out on the streets – block parties, play and engage with neighbours
2. Start small
3. Get to know your neighbours – build up relationships and trust
4. More likely to know about the struggles going on with people if you get to know them. Build trust from your front porch.
5. Public education/communication on scarcity

Group Participants

Ann Marie Shaw, Elmwood
Jill Umbach, Hanover (grew up there)/Owen Sound
Nicole Anderson, Hanover
Marjorie Snyder, Hanover