



# Rural Community Engagement

## A transformational story

Presented by Michelle Murray and Julie McKercher

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### October 2015: Setting the Stage

Point in time assessment of the organizational situation in the community

- We let folks down; it was "...easier not to work there"
- United Way Ottawa

Amalgamation "Hangover"

- service reductions
- resentment, cynicism

Shifting sands - Provincial landscapes

Existing inventory of strengths and assets



### Place setting

- It was the perfect storm...or a great opportunity
- The "plan" to engage
- "Win" not for
- "Preconditions" for transformational change
- Leveraging of key relationships
- Results exceeded expectations

You could say it went...



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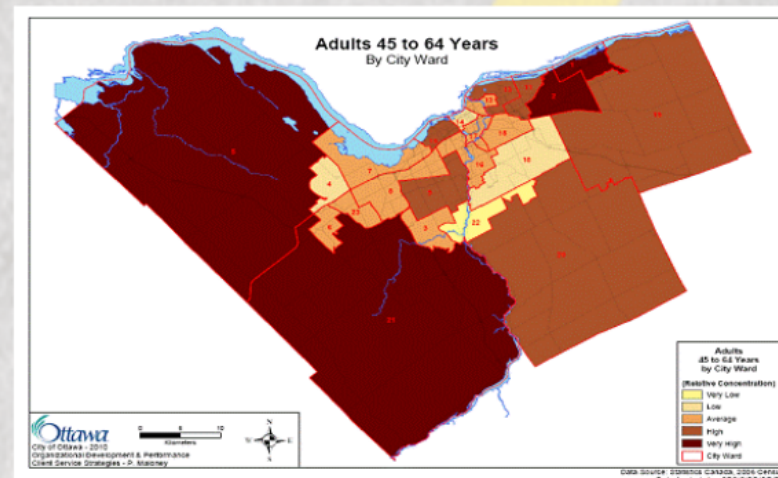
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# What do you get for \$15,000?

- ROI validates unique rural experience
  - Rallied the community
  - \$15000 to evaluate
- ## Rural Community Vitality project



Measuring  
Rural Community  
Vitality



RURAL ONTARIO  
INSTITUTE

Vision, Voice and Leadership

## ***Our Deliverables to ROI***

Develop a common understanding of strengths, & barriers in the community to aging in community;

Frame the issues in the context of the community;

Define shared goals that leverage existing strengths to remove identified barriers;

Develop and embed cross-sectorial partnerships with local stakeholders to support sustainable immediate and long-term strategies to meet community needs & sustain involvement of community stakeholders;

Determine community readiness for a phased in approach to develop/ deliver renewed services in the community that will allow older adults to stay in their homes and communities for longer;

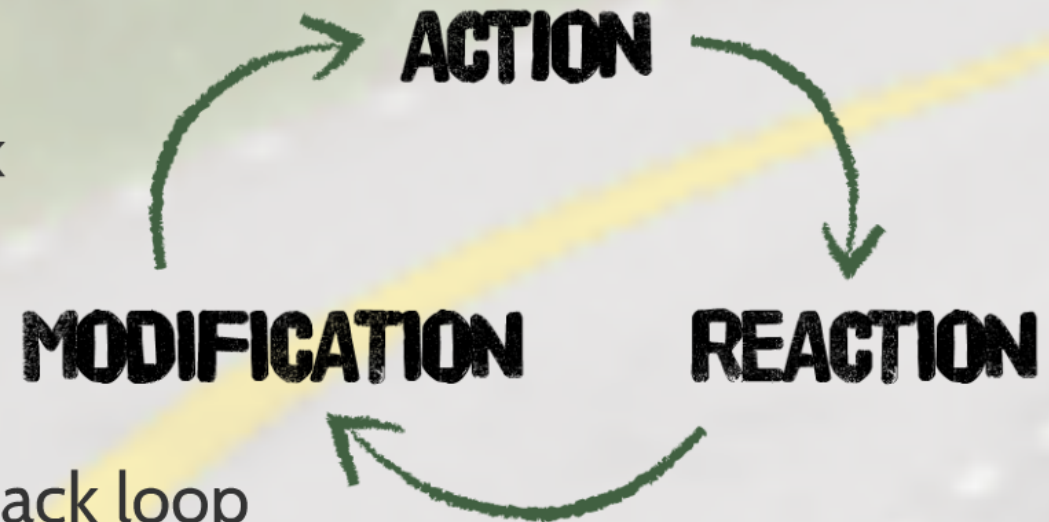
Develop and implement priority projects that will achieve the objectives;

Evaluate the effectiveness of the project and engagement process

***Did we contribute to Rural Community Vitality?  
You be the judge***

# For starters...some light fare

- Planning, planning, planning...
- Multiple channels of feedback
- Task force of champions
- Straw dog;
- Implementation plan - feedback loop
- Partnerships and Bricks and Mortar



More than just paying "lip service" - we start "*walking the talk*"

# Wait...there's more!

Co-production and the challenge of actually doing it (!)

Leveraged opportunities, including:

- Federal funding to reduce rural Isolation for seniors  
"Reducing Rural Isolation"
- Trillium application with amalgamated UW
- The *potential* of social business
- The "Men's Ministry"

# End Game & Lessons Learned

## Lesson 1

*Don't underestimate the need for **FRONT END LOADING***

*"Many healthcare or other change initiatives are not given a fighting chance because at the front end, the project lacked proper support in terms of investment" UK KPMG*

\*Phoenix pay scandal

## Lesson 2

**Community is responsible for determining and shaping the compelling vision**

Our job? Keep it front and centre! Eyes on the prize.

- Community readiness imperative
- Cascading messaging "we're all in this together"
- *Momentum* to get through the *tedium*

## Lesson 3

### CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST

Community values, realities & how far they'll go  
Organizational values, leadership and commitment

*Any and all history*

Take time to expose potential risks

Develop strategies to mitigate

***Audience Participation Question:***

***What makes it possible to ignore a whole rural community?***

## Lesson 4

Community Readiness = Crucial

*"...There are no shortcuts to any place worth going"*

- Initiative seen as serious strategic endeavor at multiple systems levels
- owned and delivered by resolute community members, organizational decision makers, staff & funders



***Audience Participation:  
Ripple mapping & our Experience***

# In Summary

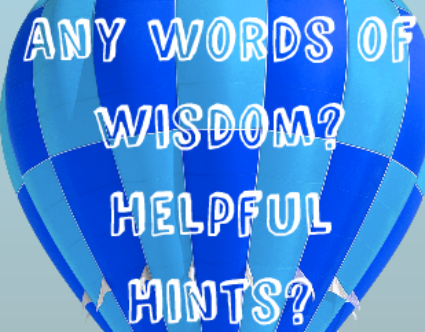
1. Front.End.Loading;
2. Keep your eyes open; joy lives in small places;



3. Be mindful of culture, and wary of long memory;
4. *"There are no shortcuts to any place worth going"*



**QUESTIONS OR  
COMMENTS?**



**ANY WORDS OF  
WISDOM?  
HELPFUL  
HINTS?**



**THANK YOU!**

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