

Highlands Community

Building
networks for
sustainable
resources

What's Up, Anyway?

What are we talking about with this “Planet Youth” stuff? How does it apply to me? This short newsletter has been put together to very briefly explain what is going on. There is no way to really get a feel for what is being proposed unless everyone is ready to really be there and listen, ask questions, challenge what doesn't make sense, and be open to what just might be possible. Getting together is our opportunity to do just that. Invitations are going out to the

community. Ideally we'll all be there because this is a movement all of us can contribute to. Our leaders and organizers, those with great new ideas, idealists and business folk, those people need to be there to represent their particular brand of influence. As Highlanders we already have a history of taking the bull by the horns. This is no different and we're good at it. Sometimes a tiny shift in perspective is all that is needed to really see



Working together for the benefit of everyone

how what we have been doing well, we can do great. And what we have done great, we can do over the top.

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Where Did Planet Youth Come From?

A substance abuse problem, recognized in Iceland, was addressed through the introduction of a community model designed to reduce or delay substance use.

This model moved Iceland from a country with one of the worst problems to one of the smallest. This model has since spread world wide. In Lanark County

Open Doors for Children and Youth, The Municipal Drug Strategy and the District Health Unit have worked to bring this model here. Now we have it and are free to benefit and build.

Our Kids

The Highlands is incredibly resource rich. Of course our most valuable resource is our kids and our investment in them is critical. There is a drug crisis happening and the community needs to take measures to address it. This is in no way someone else's problem as it affects all of us. Whether or not you are directly affected because of family or profession, you are affected by spiraling health costs, higher crime rates, vandalism and all that is attached to addiction. But of

course the highest most painful cost is the one our kids pay. It can be turned around.

A group of youth hanging out on the street with nothing to do will in all likelihood end badly. Youth engaged in something that interests them, gives them a place to go, challenges them, changes the direction that group is going.

Exposure to a world beyond the simply practical to creation and inventiveness. Who can tell where our kids might go?



Encourage our kids to get up and move!

Building on Planet Youth

Imagine if you can a single mom with a low paying job raising two children. She is spiraling into a cycle of depression and anxiety about the future that is becoming paralyzing. Her children are in school but at home they receive less and less support from a mom increasingly unable to provide it. As she watches her inability

“taking three more people out of the loop of despair”

grow, it only increases that inability exponentially faster. Now imagine a community resource

that enables that woman to meet others who are facing the same struggles. Depression and anxiety don't get out of hand, she is able to support her children and see a brighter future. She is able to rally to find other resources for her and her family taking three more people out of the loop of need and despair.

Simplification

In some ways what we're talking about here is an over-simplification of how this model works. but it is a road map, or a blue print on how, together, we can construct a community that holds within itself the means for success.

Everyone knows how resourceful

and skilled Highlanders are, all we need do is take our cues from members in our community who are willing to be invested. Each initiative builds towards the next. This is not a ripple effect. It's a tsunami effect. We know our community and we know how to listen for what we are missing.



Highlander resiliency creating Highlander solutions

Service Providers

These are wonderful people and anxious and ready to help. They are mandated to provide a service of some kind, and funded to do so. They are the people at the clinic, Open Doors for Children and Youth, Youth Center, Library, Schools, all kinds. Not only can they be a tremendous asset and huge support, they can assume leadership roles and help knit the fabric of our community in a way which is healthy and creative and works for us.

What is vital is to remember that it has to work “for us”. Not only does this mean they have a responsibility to listen, the community has a responsibility to actively participate in open dialogue about what is needed.

Communication is a tool which goes both ways. Many Highlanders have identified issues, have great ideas, have plans they would love to initiate, but unless these are shared, they can't be acted upon.



Sharing our ideas with each other to enrich all of our lives

Groups and Organizations

A great deal of strength resides in the different community organizations in the Highlands. What has already been accomplished is phenomenal, what can be done is endless.

Some have noticed less participation than in the past. Perhaps the time has come to ask the challenging but exciting ques-

“we provide a service and make the Highlands an even better place to live”

tions like “why do we do things this way?” or “how are we going to find out how to make ourselves

relevant?” or even “what will this organization look like in 5 years?”

By engaging the community not only do we provide a service and make the Highlands an even better place to live we promote and utilize what is already here. We can network to adapt to a changing world and keep our heritage.

One at a Time

Every single one of us has a stake here. And every single one of us has a responsibility. How that plays out is an individual choice. Each of us has a skill set, each of us has limitations. The challenge is for each of us to find that place in between where we are comfortable in our engagement.

What can never be underestimated is the power of that engagement. None of us will ever really know how we effect change or others in our lives.

All we can do is find where our niche is, because everyone has one, and play that role the best we can.



FEBRUARY 28 6:00

Lanark Civitan Club
2144 Pine Grove Road
Lanark

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Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth and Plan B worked together to provide an evening to present in more detail what Planet Youth is about and how this model can make real change in the Lanark Highlands.

Kevin Clouthier, Executive Director of Open Doors for Children and Youth will be presenting information on Planet Youth, assisted by Brenda MacDonald-Rowe. They have been instrumental in bringing this to Lanark County.

Melanie Mills of Plan B will be presenting information on how this model is of particular importance to the Highlands and how we can build on it for all of our citizens.

The evening will end with open discussion and we encourage everyone to come with questions or comments. Snacks and coffee and tea will be provided by Plan B.

“Towards an even more supportive and inclusive community.”

Feb 28th, 2019 at 6 pm is Go Time

- We're going to get an accurate picture of what has been done
- An idea of where the rest of the county is going and how Planet Youth progresses
- What involvement or engagement might look like and why it is important
- How do we go about it, first steps
- Most importantly, our community's feel for how we can best work together to not only address the serious issues facing our youth, but how to support each other to prevent escalating issues before they become critical.
- We have the skills, the resources, the ingenuity. We have proven that. All we need is to listen to each other and to really reach out to network and realize our potential.

