

'Talk On The Walk' Report



August 2016
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This report compiles the information gathered from the comment card, collected at the 'Talk On The Walk' event. This event was hosted by the Centre for Social Justice and Good Works on Thursday, August 18th, 2016. Admission for the event was the promise of doing a good deed. Sault Ste. Marie community members were invited to attend the Essar Centre to discuss topics with local leaders and provide solution-focused ideas and feedback that would be used to implement projects that promote good works and the ability to create positive change together. Each discussion was focused around a topic such as entrepreneurship, youth, community mobilization, employment, and community safety and guests were encouraged to speak openly and complete our comment cards provided by the volunteers.

The comment cards consisted of one question; 'How can we create positive change together in our community'? Guests were encouraged to provide genuine and honest feedback. Comment cards were anonymous, and of the survey cards distributed, 84 comment cards were collected.

The topic of entrepreneurship was raised in more than 50% of the comment cards. Three categories of entrepreneurship emerged including entrepreneurship training, ideas for locally run business that will better our economy, and mentoring and learning from one another. It should be noted that some of the comment cards could have been put into two or more of the categories, but for the purpose of this research paper, it was decided to only allocate each comment card to one of the categories.

Entrepreneurship Training accounted for 15 of the 43 comment cards collected at 'Talk On The Walk'. Feedback provided indicated that Sault Ste. Marie needs a safe training area where individual entrepreneurship skills are fostered and developed. Guest wrote about fostering developing general entrepreneurial skills but there was also a request for more individualized training for at-risk, marginalized, low-income, or underrepresented groups. One guest wrote, "Hold a workshop for the individuals on assistance to help educate on 1) how to start a business, 2) how to apply/create a business plan, 3) how to/where to apply for financial assistance for their business/service."

Locally Run Businesses that will better our economy represented 13 of the 43 comment cards and two general themes around improving the Sault Ste. Marie economy through entrepreneurial opportunities and ideas for locally run businesses. The comment cards identified the idea of entrepreneurial opportunities improving the economy on its own, but also that youth would be more likely to stay in their home community if opportunities were available, and that entrepreneurial endeavours lead to a sustainable future for the community as a whole. The comment cards offered many interesting and innovative ideas for local business. A guest wrote, "Focus entrepreneurial activities towards bringing services to isolating seniors in their own home e.g. Hairdressing, pet grooming, cloths shopping, etc." Another guest wrote, "Avoid racing to the bottom...just getting by. Think Big! Use our natural advantages – Lake Superior, International boarder, historic St. Mary's River etc."

The third category, **Mentoring and Learning** from peer-to-peer or with mentors accounted for 15 of the 43 comment cards. General feedback was that the Sault Ste. Marie business community should come together to bridge divides in personal differences. Individuals in the community have the experience and knowledge to guide entrepreneurs and those interested in entrepreneurship are eagerly awaiting advise,

encouragement, and mentorship but the connections are not being made. The missed connections are due in part to personal and cultural differences such as age, social status, ethnicity, and gender. One guest suggested that Sault Ste. Marie should, “Create a resource database of people with a skill who are willing to volunteer their time with youth.” On solving the problem of bringing individuals together in the community that can assist each other, a guest wrote, “We need more of what you did tonight (referring to the Talk On The Walk event), we need to connect with our youth and help them in creating a community they want to stay in.”

This primary research has provided the Centre with ideas about how to promote entrepreneurship and acted as a forum to address emerging issues. For an in-depth look at the comment cards regarding entrepreneurship, see the chart below identifying the comments in each of the three categories. For more information on ‘Talk On The Walk’ or to look at all 84 comments, please visit www.centresjgw.com.

Entrepreneurship Training	Ideas for locally run business that will better our economy	Mentoring and learning from one another
More information for Businesses on Training programs.	Community Succession Planning for SMW businesses, Keep ownership local.	There should be places where children can bring forward new ideas and have help from professionals to help reach their goals.
Promote financial literacy.	We need to find a way to employ young people and encourage them to get off of welfare. Perhaps a community run business that employs the “unemployable” – where they can develop skills to acquire and keep a job.	When dealing with entrepreneurship, we should aim towards the youth so they have their younger years to plan out their ideas.
Program that supports long-term training of potential new managers/owners to allow knowledge transfer.	The Great Lakes Aquarium is an amazing resource in Duluth that rings in locals and countless tourists located on the far west end of Superior. We need something unique of a similar vein here in Canada on the far eastern end of the lake. This could possibly include the “fluvarium” suggestion. We have the world largest fresh water lake in our backyard! We can use it to promote our natural setting and community. Easy access is important.	With activities such as “entrepreneurship day”, children will feel encouraged to bring new ideas that will improve the city.

<p>When I get older I want to learn how to use a credit card properly.</p>	<p>Consider building a “fluvarium” – a glass wall that replaces a good portion of the river bank where people can observe the salmon spawning run in particular, and during the rest of the year. Look to St. John’s NL where they have a fluvarium built on a small creek in the basement of a gazebo. Why not focus on this water resource – fish, lamprey, etc. Easy access is important!!</p>	<p>Having an entrepreneurship day at local schools is a good way to help the youth get involved and bring forward new ideas.</p>
<p>Have more community involvement activities down town to show it off. Show the youth the positive and possibilities it has. Teach the youth how to get involved and make change. Teach them through the schools.</p>	<p>More ways to subsidize jobs to help low income and less educated individuals find employment.</p>	<p>The youth need to be informed of what the sault has. They need to know the positives of our city. Change their perceptions of the Sault (the things to do and safety).</p>
<p>Hold a workshop for the individuals on assistance to help educate on 1) how to start a business, 2) how to apply/create a business plan, 3) how to/where to apply for financial assistance for their business/service.</p>	<p>Use some of the property in Bellevue to make a water park.</p>	<p>More employment opportunities, i.e. Retirees need mentor roles not just cashiers to make ends meet.</p>
<p>Have an entrepreneurship day where individuals have to come up with a product that they can market and try to sell to see the cost of their product and service. To try their hand at this.</p>	<p>Make our boardwalk more exciting and comfortable like playing some music and have more activities going on there.</p>	<p>Community Leadership Groups!</p>
<p>offer a community course in budgeting/essential skills for youth that is not thought of often not shared by parents.</p>	<p>Allowing local artists to create positive themed mural paintings on rundown buildings.</p>	<p>Using the high school ‘40’ community hours to engage and work with ‘tutor’ to mentor the younger children. Create groups in central areas.</p>

<p>Financial training in schools.</p>	<p>Avoid racing to the bottom...just getting by. Think Big! Use our natural advantages – Lake Superior, International boarder, historic St. Mary’s River etc.</p>	<p>I think we should provide assistance to the Gore Street Café to continue what they do and possibility expand to attract more youth to the downtown core.</p>
<p>Teach students in high school about credit cards.</p>	<p>Labour laws in Ontario have been changed to benefit the employer and not the employee. Few businesses provide worker with 40 hour weeks and benefits. New laws must be legislated in order to provide once again 40hour work weeks for people. The youth will stay if they can make a living.</p>	<p>We need more of what you did tonight, we need to connect with our youth and help them in creating a community they want to stay in.</p>
<p>Programs to help young professionals purchase existing businesses.</p>	<p>The Sault needs to quit depending on the plant. City council needs to accept a proposal for a business that will change the Sault.</p>	<p>We can promote more engagement between the very young and the elderly with simple planning of facilities in proximity to each other than regularly bringing both groups together.</p>
<p>Youth educated in financial management.</p>	<p>We have a very large tourism sector that we can tap.</p>	<p>A mentor program for youth job shadowing/grab a coffee/chat/unpaid work experience that is not community hours for high school but a practicum.</p>
<p>Teach children about entrepreneurship and start young!</p>	<p>Focus entrepreneurial activities towards bringing services to isolating seniors in their own home e.g. Hairdressing, pet grooming, cloths shopping, etc.</p>	<p>Let the youth be the change they wish to see in the community. We should use our outh as consultants. Bring them together, listen to them and give them hope that their solutions will not be put aside. Make a task force, pick a couple of problems and work to find solutions.</p>

A need for a collaborative working space.		Support the Gore Street entrepreneurs. They are trying to bring Gore Street together and give it a community feel. We need to focus on that area in a positive light, invite people down there. Maybe have a street party put together by the downtown association once that construction is done.
Entrepreneurship, Succession planning training for business owners.		Create a resource database of people with a skill who are willing to volunteer their time with youth.

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