

Animating Community Mediation in Peterborough

Image



Generative dialogue & new narrative arts surface possibilities and commitments

A fresh sense of possibility surrounds a pioneering community mediation project in Peterborough, Ontario this week. A summit hosted Monday by Axiom News wove generative dialogue and the new narrative arts around a discovery of the project's life-giving essence as well as what people are excited to commit to going forward.

In this post, we share part of the harvest of narrative arts created from the summit. The artifacts include a quick video clip (with more to come) by videographer Amber Pula, an illustration by graphic artist Yvonne Hollandy, and a written-word story by keynote listener for the day Ben Wolfe.

Image

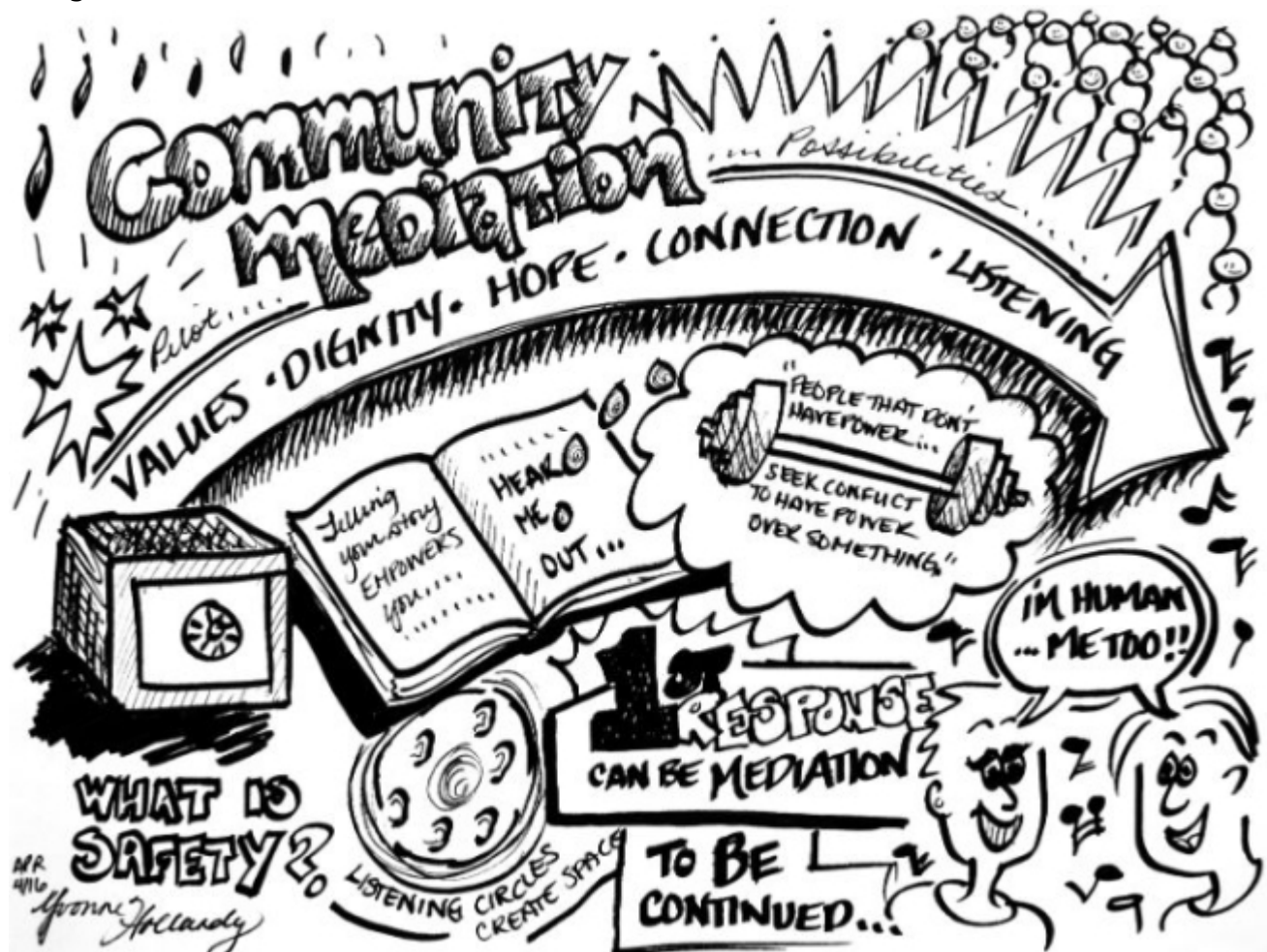


Illustration: Yvonne Hollandy

Community Mediation Project Spreads Ripples of Possibility

At a half-day summit, key partners recommit, and participants share a sense of renewal

A project to bring community mediation to Peterborough is having ripple effects through the city, and the organizations bringing it into being.

Participants in a summit yesterday to evaluate the project's startup phase and sense its next steps forward said it's already been a starting point for many people who are hurting, and they are feeling the same sense of renewal themselves.

Image



Photographer: Ben Wolfe

"The Mediation Project has been a conduit for people to come together," Jack Gillan, a board member of Peterborough Housing Corporation said. "Seeds of change are blooming within this room."

"We are digging deep into core values behind our work," Alice Czitrom, victim services coordinator for the Peterborough Police Service said.

In small group and solo journalling processes about the peak moments of the project so far, one participant after another described being moved and changed. The outcomes so far are small, but the sense of possibility is large.

"To see people feel free enough, safe enough to open up about themselves — seeing that hope is the most amazing thing," said Maisie Watson, a housing social worker at the Community Counselling and Resource Centre. "To see people finally believe that they can make change. To see the light in their eyes."

In reaching across organizations, the project seems to have touched a common thread of new and more emergent and collaborative ways of working. "The agenda is changing around community and service delivery," Jack Gillan said.

Participants and organizational partners in the summit, hosted by Axiom News, recommitted themselves strongly to the project. There was a shared sense of creating a space for the community to discover and exercise its own resilience.

“Just being heard can change a person,” one participant said. A number of participants referred to a sense of being part of a wider effort to make Peterborough a “city that listens.”

Peter Williams, community development coordinator at Peterborough Police Service, summed up the day by describing it as a bridge to the possibilities that lie ahead.

The Community Mediation project has received funding from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The John Howard Society, Peterborough Housing Corporation and Peterborough Police Service are involved as partners.

Writer: Ben Wolfe

Visit www.peterboroughdialogues.media to view the original story post.

Update:

Additional harvest items from the day have now been created and posted. Click the links below for another video and phrase poem:

[Optimism and self-sufficiency surface through summit](#)

[A Peterborough father discovers the generosity of his neighbours](#)

For more information about hosting and narration by Axiom News, email [peter\(at\)axiomnews.com](mailto:peter(at)axiomnews.com).