Catalysts for Change:
A Report on the
Knight Creative Communities Initiative

MAY 2008
The Knight Creative Communities Initiative (KCCI) is a partnership of 31 citizen catalysts, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, Richard Florida’s Creative Class Group and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

The venture pulled together the ideas and talents of all parts of the community to build a more attractive environment for economic prosperity. The year-long effort was built upon Dr. Richard Florida’s research and writings, which emphasize human creativity as the primary engine of economic growth. Dr. Florida believes that communities that attract and retain creative people will grow and prosper.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation launched the Knight Creative Communities Initiative in three communities. The Twin Ports were honored to be selected for participation. This project is a continuation of the Knight Foundation’s support for the community and economic development efforts of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation.
The Four Ts – Territorial Assets, Technology, Talent, and Tolerance

KCCI is focused around the four Ts of a healthy and vibrant community: Territorial Assets, Technology, Talent, and Tolerance. According to a growing body of research, a comprehensive economic development strategy requires the presence of all four Ts. Duluth and Superior have significant Territorial Assets, a small but growing Technology sector and a wealth of Talent potential, but could be more welcoming and inclusive.

KCCI was announced in January 2007. Thirty-one citizen catalysts were chosen in March 2007 after an open and competitive application process facilitated by a group of Duluth and Superior community leaders. In May 2007, Dr. Richard Florida presented the keynote address at the annual meeting of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation before a record crowd of 600 enthusiastic attendees.

The catalysts attended a two-day training session presented by The Creative Class Group, a global advisory services firm founded by Dr. Richard Florida. The catalysts created five action teams to develop initiatives based on the 4 Ts. The action teams are ArtWorks!, Brain Gain, Mix It Up, Twin Ports Pathways, and We Mean Green. A sixth team, Communication, was formed with a representative from each action team.
The Twin Ports KCCI Catalysts

Tara Alfonsi – H.T. Klatzky & Associates
Gary Banker – Superior Public Schools
Henry Banks – Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial, Inc.
Kathy Bartsias – Duluth Public Schools
Chani Becker – Carlson Media
Jen Bertsch – Moxy Coaching
Robert Browne – Superior/Douglas County Board of Supervisors
Drew Digby – MN Department of Employment & Economic Development
Patrick Donahue – Natural Resources Research Institute
Kat Eldred – KBA Management and A.H. Zeppa Family Foundation
John Foucault – Points North Consulting
Brian Graff – SMDC Health System
Gregory Grell – WDSE-TV
Debra Hannu – Duluth Public Schools
Gary Hedin – Downtown Dental Care of Duluth
John Heino – Como Oil & Propane
Jerry Hembd – University of Wisconsin-Superior Extension
Lisa Heyesen – APEX (Area Partnership for Economic Expansion)

Keir Johnson – A.H. Zeppa Family Foundation
Pamela Kramer – Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Linda Krug – University of Minnesota Duluth
Kris Larson – Minnesota Land Trust
Mary Mathews – Northeast Entrepreneur Fund
Crystal Pelkey – New Moon Girl Media and The Play Ground
Heather Rand – MN Department of Employment & Economic Development
Samantha Gibb Roff – Duluth Art Institute
Matthew Schoeppner – MN Department of Employment & Economic Development
Cheryl Skafte – United Way of Greater Duluth
Jennifer Smith – Eikill & Schilling
Phoebe Smith-Ellis – American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO)

Project Staff
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
Holly C. Sampson, President
Julie Munger, Community Initiatives Officer
Kathy Forslund, Consultant

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Polly M. Talen, Program Director
The Teams and Their Initiatives

• ArtWorks!

Catalysts
Kat Eldred
Samantha Gibb Roff
John Heino
Keir Johnson
Crystal Pelkey

Volunteers
Nehrwr Abdul-Wahid  Ben Jorgenson
Malissa Bahr          Victor Klimoski
Lisa Blade            Karin Kraemer
Bob Boone             Linda Kratt
Jane Brenny           Alberta Marana
Jodi Broadwell        JoAnn Martin
Alyssa Cahill         Erik Nelson
Kris Collins          Mary Ness
Paul Damberg          Kami Norland
Roxanne DeLille       Nancy Norr
Martin DeWitt         Jim Perlman
Eric Edwardson        Mary Plaster
Beth Erickson         Craig Samborski
Janelle Fresvik       Kristi Schmidt
Ann Glumac            Julie Steiff
Steve Grazier         Nan Stubenvoll
Allison Hanig         Nikki Townsend
Jon Heyesen           Liz Vandersteen
Jackson Huntley       Pete Weidman
Tad Johnson           Rob West
Goal
To improve regional prosperity through inspiring innovative collaborations between the arts, business and civic sectors.

Initiative
ArtWorks! Gala, Creative Economy Showcase and Conference
The ArtWorks! Gala, Creative Economy Showcase and Conference were held March 13 and 14, 2008. More than 300 arts, business and civic leaders participated. Sixty exhibitors participated in the Creative Economy Showcase.

“I thought what was accomplished in such a short time was just short of amazing.” – Guest Presenter

The Conference resulted in the creation of eight new initiatives that are currently being developed by new teams of volunteers:

1. Twin Ports Arts Alliance
2. Lake Superior Arts Festival
3. Duluth and Superior Leadership Program
4. Web site listing Twin Ports job opportunities in arts and culture
5. Artists Mentoring Youth
6. Public Arts Coalition
7. Duluth and Superior Art Corridor
8. LEAP (Lake Effect Art Portal)

ArtWorks! raised nearly $94,000 to support its initiatives. Significant in-kind contributions were also received. Moneys remaining after the ArtWorks! Conference will be made available for the new initiatives through grants.
The work of the ArtWorks! team and volunteers was supported by many sponsors, including:
APEX (Area Partnership for Economic Expansion)
Arrowhead Regional Arts Council
Canal Park Lodge
Como Oil and Propane
Compudyne
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
Duluth Art Institute
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
The JPG Group
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Lake Superior College
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Minnesota Power
Northland’s Newscenter
Reader Weekly
Red Rock Radio
SMDC Health System
A.H. Zeppa Family Foundation
Brain Gain

Goal
To reduce the “brain drain” in Duluth and Superior by 10%.

Initiatives
Higher Education Institution Cooperation
The Brain Gain team succeeded in convening representatives from all seven of the region’s higher education institutions to share information about programs and events at their respective institutions.

The team hopes to continue to work with the group to identify new collaborative efforts that can help to achieve the long-term goal of attracting students and retaining graduates.

Catalysts
Drew Digby
Pat Donahue
Lisa Heyesen
Pam Kramer
Linda Krug
Mary Mathews
Heather Rand
Matt Schoepner

Volunteers
Mary Anderson
Jeni Eltink
Rondi Erickson
Roger Johnson
Jeannie Kermeen
Ann Miller
Bill Mittlefehldt
Cathy Richards
Chad Schrandt
Annie Sertich
Nick Trimner
Kelly Utyro
Steve Wagner
Amy Westbrook
College Connection
This Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce program links college students with persons from the local business communities. The Brain Gain catalysts worked to expand the program to the University of Wisconsin-Superior. A pilot program with six students was initiated during spring semester 2008.

The Superior Chamber of Commerce Jaycees will work with the University of Wisconsin-Superior to continue this initiative.

“I get to figure out my future career and he gets to be that person who leads me in the right direction.” – Student Comment

Forty Below
The goal of the Forty Below program is to encourage young professionals to take positions on Boards of Directors of local nonprofit and community organizations. With help from the Creative Class Group, the catalysts researched such programs in other cities. The information was shared with the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce which is considering executing such a program through FUSE Duluth.

The Brain Gain team did not raise any funds for its projects. Supporters of the team include:
The College of St. Scholastica
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
Duluth Business University
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
Lake Superior College
Superior Chamber of Commerce Jaycees
University of Minnesota Duluth
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College
• Mix It Up

**Catalysts**
Henry Banks  
Jen Bertsch  
Greg Grell  
Phoebe Smith-Ellis

**Volunteers**
Tonya Roth  
Veronica Quillien  
Adeline Wright

**Goal**
To create a place for comfortable dialogue about diversity and inclusivity and help the Twin Ports become a more welcoming and inclusive place to live.

**Initiative**
**The Hodge Podge Supper Club**
The Mix It Up team scheduled six dinners at local restaurants. The dinners were open to anyone interested in social bridging by getting outside their comfort zones to discuss cultural gaps in their communities.

“I think this is a great opportunity to meet new people who have different backgrounds.”

“I believe great things can happen by simply beginning a dialogue!” - Dinner Attendees

The Mix It Up team would like to see a continuation of the Hodge Podge Supper Club if a sponsoring group can be found. The team will be sponsoring two other events. A presentation by Peoples Institute North titled “Racism, Power and Privilege” is scheduled. The team will offer KCCI catalysts an opportunity to take a cultural competency inventory followed by a personal and/or group assessment.

**The Mix It Up team has raised $3,000 to support its projects.**
**Support was received from:**
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
**Twin Ports Pathways**

**Catalysts**
Tara Alfonsi  
John Foucault  
Gary Hedin  
Pat Heffernan  
Kris Larson  
Cheryl Skafte  
Jen Smith

**Volunteer**
James Gittemeier

**Goals**

1. To ensure that a physical network and related infrastructure exist for non-motorized transportation.

2. To link people to the network and to promote the network.

**Initiatives**

**Train/Bike Ride**

Fifty passengers rode the North Shore Scenic Railroad from the Duluth Depot to the Two Harbors Depot, then biked the 26 miles back to Duluth. A post-event party was held at Grandma’s Sports Garden in Duluth.

The Train/Bike Ride could become an annual event in the Twin Ports if a sponsoring organization can be found.

“Thanks for trying something new!”

“It was exciting.”

“See you next year!”

-Train/Bike Ride Participants
Bike Rack Art Project

This project involves hosting a competition to design, manufacture and install ten artist-designed bike racks in greater downtown Duluth. The Bike Rack Art Project should be completed by Fall 2008. Partners in this project include the Duluth Arts Commission, Duluth Art Institute, Duluth Area Trails Alliance, Fit City Duluth and the Greater Downtown Council.

The team hopes that this project can be recreated in Superior and across the city of Duluth.

The team received $15,000 in grant funding to date. Applications for additional grants are pending. In-kind donations were also received.

The Twin Ports Pathways initiatives are supported by:
Continental Bike and Ski
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
Grandma’s Restaurants
Ski Hut
We Mean Green

Catalysts
Kathy Bartsias
Chani Becker
Bob Browne
Brian Graff
Deb Hannu
Jerry Hembd
Mary Mathews
Pam Kramer

Volunteers
Mary Dragich
Russ Kurhajetz
Jeff Maida

Goal
To further economic, environmental and social sustainability in the Twin Ports and western Lake Superior region through education, networking and action.

Initiative
Twin Ports Early Adopters Project
Early in the KCCI project, We Mean Green began discussions with the existing group, Sustainable Duluth. Sustainable Duluth was working on the design of an Early Adopters of Sustainability Project using principles of The Natural Step, a program developed in Sweden that helps communities become more sustainable. Together, Sustainable Duluth and We Mean Green co-founded the community-based organization Sustainable Twin Ports. The parties decided that their first initiative would be the Twin Ports Early Adopters Project.

This project will provide training to 15 teams from local businesses and institutions that commit to intensive training in sustainable business planning and implementing sustainable practices. As the first year of the Knight Creative Communities Initiative drew to a close, Sustainable Twin Ports was in the process of taking applications for Early Adopters. Training will start in September.

Sustainable Twin Ports is in the process of incorporating as a 501(c)(3) organization. The organization will complete the Early Adopters Project and will continue to work toward promoting sustainability in the region.
Sustainable Twin Ports has raised $180,000 for the Twin Ports Early Adopters Project. Support for the project was received from:
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
A.H. Zeppa Family Foundation

• Communication

Catalysts
Drew Digby
John Foucault
Samantha Gibb Roff
Brian Graff
Greg Grell

Goals
1. To promote public awareness about the Knight Creative Communities Initiative.

2. To promote effective communication among the KCCI catalysts and teams, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Creative Class Group.

The team was very successful in generating media attention and interest throughout the program year. The team developed a Web site, www.KCCIDuluth.wordpress.com, that provides current news and information related to the Knight Creative Communities Initiative.

Initiative
The Downtown Economic Development Brown Bag Series
This series of presentations and discussions helped promote awareness of KCCI and improve the public’s understanding of the Four Ts. The series was co-sponsored by Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX), www.TheNorthlandWorks.org, and Minnesota Power. Attendance at the Brown Bags was typically between 35-45 people.

The Brown Bag series will continue after the conclusion of the Knight Creative Communities Initiative. The project has strong support from the co-sponsors and demand remains strong.
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.kcciduluth.wordpress.com
www.dsacommunityfoundation.com/initiatives