

[View this email online](#)

Message from the Acting Executive Director

Well, it's December, with its shorter days and longer nights, and for some, a natural time to pause and reflect on life's blessings.

For everyone in the world, 2020 has been a year like no other. We've all had to change the way we do things, which makes us realize what we take for granted. Coming out of lockdown, many of us had a new appreciation for getting together with friends and family, being outside in parks and on trails, being able to travel more freely (at least in the Atlantic Bubble), and being able to do good work with other people.

The pandemic has also highlighted inequities in Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada, and around the world. At Inspiring Communities we are grateful to have these issues brought more into the spotlight.

As you look through this newsletter, you'll learn more about some of our work and what we're feeling grateful about. And you'll meet some amazing community members who are at the heart of our work.

Personally, I feel grateful for what is possible when everyone in the world pauses and reflects on how we go forward together in a better way. And I am very grateful to the people who are working to do this: individuals, community organizations, systems leaders, and government. We have a long way to go, and Inspiring Communities is honoured to have a place in bringing about a just and equitable world.

Wishing everyone a healthy, safe, peaceful and restorative holiday season and return of the light.

Warmly,



Cari Patterson

Acting Executive Director
Director of Research & Evaluation

Our Community Initiatives

Our three nested community sites, [Northside Rising](#), [Between the Bridges](#), and [Turning the Tide](#), recently prepared these videos that describe the impact their work is having in the words of the community members. We invite you to take 10 minutes to watch all three videos. Click the individual links below OR click the video screen to go to the play list on Youtube and watch all three.



[Between the Bridges](#)



[Northside Rising Logo](#)



[Turning the Tide](#)

[Between the Bridges Community Video](#)

[Northside Rising Community Video](#)

[Turning the Tide Community Video](#)



Gleaning Evaluation Gold

Inspiring Communities and its nested initiatives use a [developmental evaluation approach](#) to reflect upon achievements and learnings in real time to adjust course as needed and evolve planned activities. Using a set of reflective questions, the Inspiring Communities leadership team and the leadership team of nested initiatives reflect on progress quarterly.

During a recent presentation to government partners, these learnings were highlighted.

Visit the Wayside blog to [read Panning for DE Gold.](#)

A 2020 Gratitude List

Community Director Tyler Colbourne recently surveyed our network to see what lessons or experiences our folks are grateful for in what has seemed a most trying year.

As the work we do demonstrates, we see value in the surfacing of some of the tensions around race, rights, equity and democracy that have characterized this year. COVID's impact has been profound and has implemented a pause that we may have needed, even if we really didn't ask for or want it.

Visit the Wayside blog to read [Looking Back at 2020 with Gratitude.](#)



REGISTER TO ATTEND

#WeavEast learnings and pivots

As we prepare to enter a new phase of the WeavEast initiative, our evaluation team has, through interviews and analysis, sought to determine what we can learn from the project so far. [WeavEast](#) is an attempt to weave connections between and among those working in the social innovation space in Atlantic Canada. So far, there has been a phase of paid fellowships and a following phase of funded projects and facilitated themed conversations.

The provocative findings so far are around a set of paradoxes, or Wicked Questions, that have been present since the project's inception. These will be further explored in a future set of posts on the Wayside blog in the new year.

Overarching Wicked Questions

Divergence ↔ Convergence:

How do we play/maintain a divergent/groan zone space of innovation, when convergence is needed for nourishment and sanity?

The journey has been one of trying to keep open the space for divergence/experimentation, with sufficient convergence (where people have a clear sense of what's happening) to keep people motivated to continue the ride.

Inclusion ↔ Exclusion:

How do we build the deep relationships that are the lifeblood of a thriving network AND build /welcome in diverse peoples to an intentionally inclusive network?

How do we move from a feeling of exclusion to inclusion? The WE network has been punctuated by in-person gatherings, which has caused a sense of, "who was invited? And why wasn't I?" How do we broaden a sense of inclusion?

Centralized ↔ Distributed

How can we have a well-functioning initiative (with, for instance, administration support, budgeting) AND have the emergence/power rest with the periphery? How do we build a network to a web / distributed model and not a 'spokes-from-a-central-hub' model.

The learnings and pivots will be shared more fully and discussed at the upcoming WeavEast Jam (above).


Please note: All are welcome to attend this event, whether you have been a part of WeavEast before now or not.



Office news: holiday hours & COVID

Our office will be closed for the holidays from end of day December 18, 2020 through to January 4, 2021. Currently, our staff are working remotely to honour Public Health's requests to limit unnecessary potential exposure to COVID-19.

Read about our [Operations Manager's experience](#) in creating a co-working space with this new unwanted virus tenant.

 Staff members gathered for a "maskerade", a party where they made masks together. Pictured in their masks are Miranda, Alex, Erin, Nicole, Tyler and Olu.



Learn Mindfulness on Wayside

[Wayside](#) is Inspiring Communities' new online learning community. It will formally launch in the new year, and in February, we will offer a foundational course on Mindfulness. Led by well-known mindfulness coach Alan Sloan, this five-module course [is now accepting registrations](#). If 2020 has taught us nothing else, it is that knowing our full selves, including the challenging parts, is necessary to help us engage with systemic change. By developing an active mindfulness practice, you can better prepare yourself to connect meaningfully with others.

The course is priced at \$75.00. If you're interested in participating and cost is a barrier, contact us at hello@waysideinitiative.ca

Explore Wayside now | [The site is currently in a "soft launch" phase](#), and there are more changes to come. Set up your profile if you haven't yet done so, and be ready to join in the conversations and connect for collaboration!



You are receiving this newsletter because you are connected to our network through our work or team. If you don't want to receive further newsletters you can unsubscribe below. Got a friend who'd like to be added to our list? [Send them this link.](#)

