

# Catalysts for Change:

*A Report on the  
Knight Creative Communities Initiative*

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MAY 2008



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA  
**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**



**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*
- Patrick Heffernan –  
*Wheeler Associates*
- 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 Skafta – *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.

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

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### **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

### **Catalysts**

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

### **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

## **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.

### **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.

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

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### **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.

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*"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*

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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.

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*"Thanks for trying something new!"*

*"It was exciting."*

*"See you next year!"*

-Train/Bike Ride Participants

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### **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](http://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](http://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](http://www.kcciduluth.wordpress.com)  
[www.dsacommunityfoundation.com/initiatives](http://www.dsacommunityfoundation.com/initiatives)



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA  
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