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Community-Based Education Program



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Promotional Copy

#4188 – Social Benefits of Culture and Heritage

Organization Information

The host organization is a non-governmental, non-profit charity based in the Kawarthas Region with an office in Peterborough. Its mission is to protect the natural environment and cultural heritage of the Kawarthas. Established in 2001, it has two distinct programs being a land trust that works with landowners and the community to identify and protect key ecological and cultural features in the Kawarthas, and an active Cultural Heritage program including a database of cultural heritage sites, providing on-line, GIS mapping and other technology to community heritage groups. Its program activities include land conservation, farm outreach and research, mapping and sustainability planning

Project Information

The benefits of many culture and heritage assets and features are often misunderstood. Similar to the protection of the environment or public spaces, culture heritage resources are important elements of any place and are true drivers towards robust, local economies, social cohesion, authenticity, character, and sense of place. The social outcomes of these aspects are often manifested in increased awareness and knowledge of cultural resources, community identity and pride, and tourism, though the benefits extend far deeper. For example, theatres and museums provide a focal point for community involvement and engagement. It also draws tourists for their featured content. Heritage buildings in traditional downtown cores, churches, old barns, stone fences are aesthetically pleasing, and build and define a sense of place that make people want to live, work and play in a particular community (e.g. Port Hope, City of Peterborough, Millbrook) .

The purpose of this project is to conduct research on **social benefits** of cultural heritage conservation and develop a list of indicators to evaluate these benefits. Ideally, students will complete a project that can be used for advocating cultural recognition and protection, heritage conservation, and appreciation in the Kawarthas.

Benefit to the Host Organization and Community

The benefits of culture and heritage are often intangible and misunderstood. The host promotes protection of the natural environment, culture, and heritage through a variety of ways including acquisition, management and stewardship of significant sites and features. One of the other key ways that it fulfills its mission is through advocacy, education, networking, and generating awareness to the value of culture, heritage, and the environment. Anecdote and case studies are adequate but the host needs a quantified approach to demonstrating the value of protecting and promoting these 'assets and features' to the variety of stakeholders that it deals with including: all levels of government, private landowners and businesses, and the tourism sector.

The recommendations from this project will be used by a variety of key individuals and stakeholders including all levels of government, industry and tourism, First Nations and not-for-profit group of varying culture, environment and heritage interests.

The timing for this project is also significant. Municipal governments and Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO's) through the Kawarthas and beyond are engaging in "Municipal Cultural Planning", "Cultural Mapping" and "Sustainability Plans". The policies and recommendations out of these plans need teeth and an impetus for their implementation. The findings of this project may serve as a foundation for elements of these plans. The host is involved in all of these processes currently under way in the Kawartha Region

What students might learn

- Skills in interviewing and gathering information from various stakeholders.
- Report writing under supervision of experienced staff in the field
- Opportunity to share academic research to relevant key individuals and stakeholders through presentation, question and answer, sharing of final report.
- Utilize and enhance skills in research methods, report writing, and stakeholder relations.
- Experience in a professional environment including interaction with staff and representatives from community organizations, government and private sector.

Screening or Training Requirements

None

Skills or Experience Needed

- Interest in and or knowledge of social, culture, heritage, history, tourism, economic development or land use planning
- Research skills, including report writing and presentation
- Strong organizational, communication, listening, and interpersonal skills
- Ability and interest in developing interview questions and conducting interviews

Resources Required for Project Provided by Host

The organization can provide contacts and key individual/stakeholder information, will assist with general methodology, and provide suggestions on source documents. Any travel and photocopy costs will be available where approved in advance. Students will be provided space and computer at its office if required.