

The InWithForward team

Going forward **with** people

by Rosalind Ho

The InWithForward team from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, gave a presentation at BACI's General Meeting on June 5th, 2014, about what they have learned so far during their 3-month stay in Burnaby.

Jonas, Yani, Sarah, Janey, Laura, and Sabrina are a cheerful and dedicated team of designers, community people, and social science types who are working in partnership with BACI, PosAbilities, and the Simon Fraser Society for Community Living on how to enable the kind of connections that help people explore and expand their sense of who they are (rather than the connections that keep people stuck or stigmatized).



InWithForward team members (left to right): Yani, Jonas and Sarah

The team is dedicated to planning **with** people “on the ground,” and not planning **for** people from afar. The InWithForward manifesto is to “try and turn social safety nets into trampolines.”

For the last 2 months, the InWithForward *Me, Us and Them Starter Project* team has been living in an apartment at 7575 Kingsway Avenue (Stride Place) in Burnaby. Their goal is to listen to, and learn from, their neighbours about the day-to-day realities of their lives and to come up with strategies to close overlooked service gaps, reduce social isolation, and increase connectivity between people.

The Edmonds area was chosen for this project because it already contains a booming community that includes people who are immigrants, single parents, people with disabilities, and those who live in poverty.

“*Connectedness does not equal belonging.*” Fern, who has been living at Stride Place for over 11 years, is a good example of this observation. Fern has a dog that she loves, a life skills

worker, a home helper, and many neighbours; but Fern still feels lonely. She says that she does the same things every day, and that her life is not meaningful.

The InWithForward team has learned a lot from their neighbours and other people that they have met over the past weeks. Suggestions that they have received on how to connect and plan with people “on the ground” include going out for coffee, a day of shopping, and fun at the bowling alley. All of these activities could help bring fun **into** peoples’ lives and push **out** loneliness and anxiety.

MOVING (inwith) FORWARD:

InWithForward is now looking for partners to prototype their new service delivery models. Three of their ideas are:

KUDOS – “a new badge system that connects youth and adults to experiences that widen and deepen their skills, networks and roles.” Check out their video on KUDOS [here](#).



CURIO – a way to “create a stream of new and varied ideas coming into people’s pipelines, curated on relevant topics and contexts, to change how conversations go and expose people to inspirations that will lead to self-growth and development.” Check out their video on CURIO [here](#).

COACH IN YOUR CORNER – an idea that “busts social and emotional barriers in real life situations, with a coach that will model, provide direct feedback, and help develop strategies in real time.” Check out the video [here](#).



For more information on InWithForward and the Burnaby Starter project, please visit their [website](#) or email hello@inwithforward.com