

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY TIES TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP A Community Forum

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Young adults are coming your way! This summer, local young people from Michigan State University's Community Ties to Entrepreneurship project will be contacting business and nonprofit professionals. Over the next three months, Community Organizers will be encouraging local professionals to join the Community Ties Social Network at <http://communityties.us/traverse>. Samantha Allen, Joel Janik, Joe Berkey and Amy McCoy are focusing on contacting employees and entrepreneurs working in professional fields such as medical, technology, computers and a few other areas as indicated from a survey of students at Traverse City West High School. However, all business and nonprofit professionals are of interest!

A study recently conducted by Michigan State University confirms that although students would like to remain in their local community as adults, they do not see a way to pursue their dream profession locally. The Community Ties website allows young people, business and nonprofit professionals to complete a virtual job shadowing form thus allowing youth to learn how they can pursue careers in their community.

The goal of the website is to:

- Spark interactions between youth and professional role models, business peers with each other, students with each other, and budding entrepreneurs with experienced business professionals.

- Expand career awareness for the many viable careers in our community that are invisible – jobs done behind closed doors and computer screens that many of us are not aware exist.
- Prevent bright flight by strengthening Community Ties through placing local opportunities and invisible jobs in the spotlight. Youth may realize “there’s no place like home.”
- Connecting with other professional peers can help ignite inspiration and innovation to deal with everyday challenges.
- Make our community stronger and more tied together than ever!

As the economy globalizes, communities must develop and retain youthful entrepreneurs who are fluent with information and communications technologies and who can help expand the reach of local small businesses. MSU is collaborating with MSU Extension, Traverse City Area Public Schools and other local partners to facilitate this outreach and research project. The website is part of a multi-year program that aims to forge new social ties among youth and local entrepreneurs through online social networking and community development activities. The project focuses on enhancing the development of both groups and the communities in which they live. The effort is funded by USDA and Kellogg Foundation grants. Dr. Robert LaRose of MSU’s Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media is the project’s principal investigator. Dr. LaRose defines the project this way, “We hope to energize youth and local entrepreneurs to carve out new economic opportunities together in a changing economy and to show local youth that there is a future role for them in their home community.”

For more details about Community Ties to Entrepreneurship and to join the social networking website, visit <http://communityties.us/traverse>.

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