Discussion of Mid-Sized Rhode Island Cities

Eric Rosengren

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SPARK
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Our Goal: is to help the everyday entrepreneur gain access to the knowledge and resources needed to accelerate business success.

Our Target Population: Greater Holyoke Residents

Our Shared Result: Increase Latino business ownership in Holyoke to 30% from the current 5%

- Develop a downtown business district that is representative of our community.
Core Partners

- Greater Holyoke Chamber Centennial Foundation
- City of Holyoke
- The Artery (Holyoke Creative Arts)
- Nuestra Raices
- Holyoke Public Library
- Holyoke Community Collage
- SCORE
Stats

SPARK Launch Stats
July 2015 - Jan 2016

Demographics
- Total Students: 27
- Holyoke Residents: 60%
- Women: 48%
- Latino: 70%

Outcomes
- New Startups: 16
- Existing Business Developed: 4
- Jobs Created: 50
- People Effected: 98
Key Drivers

- Siloed Initiatives
  - Multiple city programs without collaboration strategy
- Deteriorated Infrastructure
  - Neglected Buildings = High Cost to bring to code
- Fragmented Community
  - History of division acts as a barrier to true city wide collaboration
Strategies

▶ Entreprenurial Ecosystem
  ▶ Monthly Cross Program Director Meetings
  ▶ Mapping Referrals and Entreprenurer’s Pathway

▶ Community Driven Events
  ▶ Live, Learn, and Launch Series of Programming
  ▶ Intentional Focus on Creating Truly Inclusive Offerings
Learning About the System

- Space requirements come in all shapes and sizes
  - Turn Key Office Space
  - Makers Space
  - Community Kitchens
  - Popup Restaurants
  - Co-Work Space

- A Safe Place to Incubate Ideas

- Continuing to Work on Streamlined Permitting Process
Progress Toward Systems Change

- Community Coming Together
  - Strong Cross Cultural Bonds Being Created
  - Entrepreneurs Know and Support Each Other

- Holyoke on the Map for Entrepreneurship
  - Recognized by Surrounding Cities for Most Innovative Approach
  - Getting Noticed on a National Scale

- Creating a change in the perception of our cities identity and potential for investment.
Accelerating Change

- Statewide Entrepreneurial Network
- Co-work and Incubator Space in Holyoke
- City Wide Entrepreneurial & Developer Tax Incentives