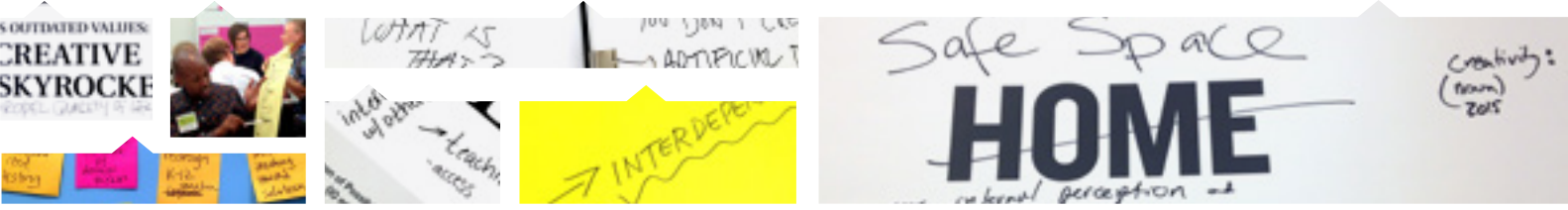
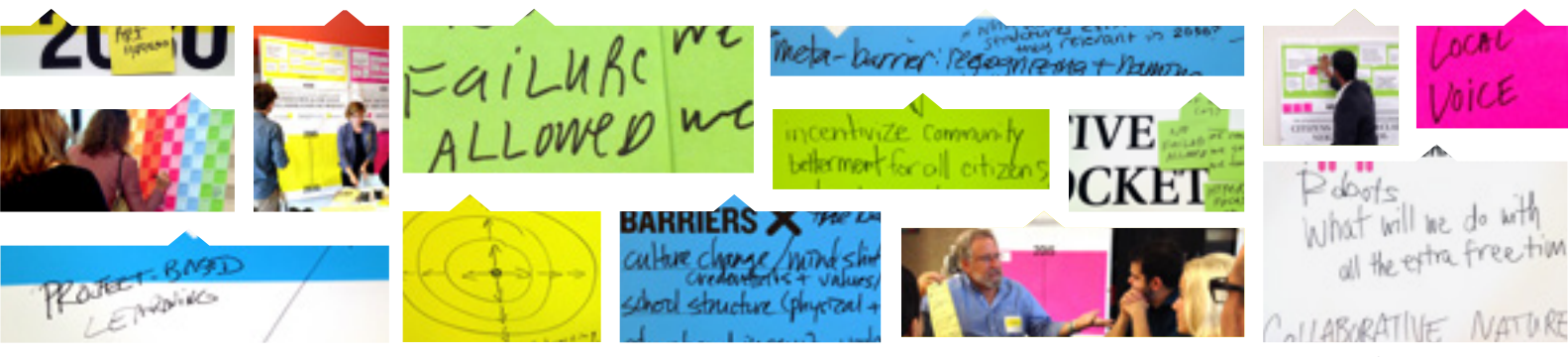
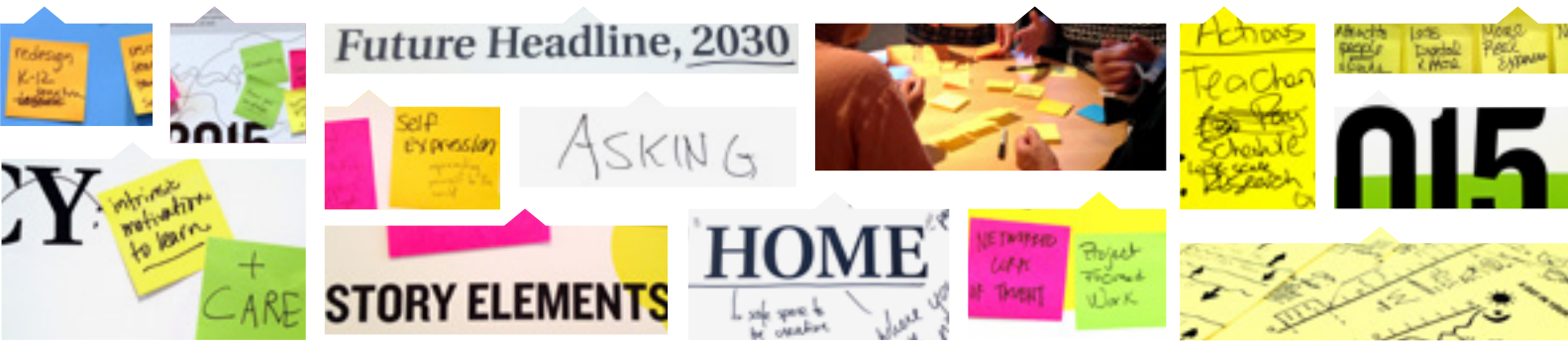
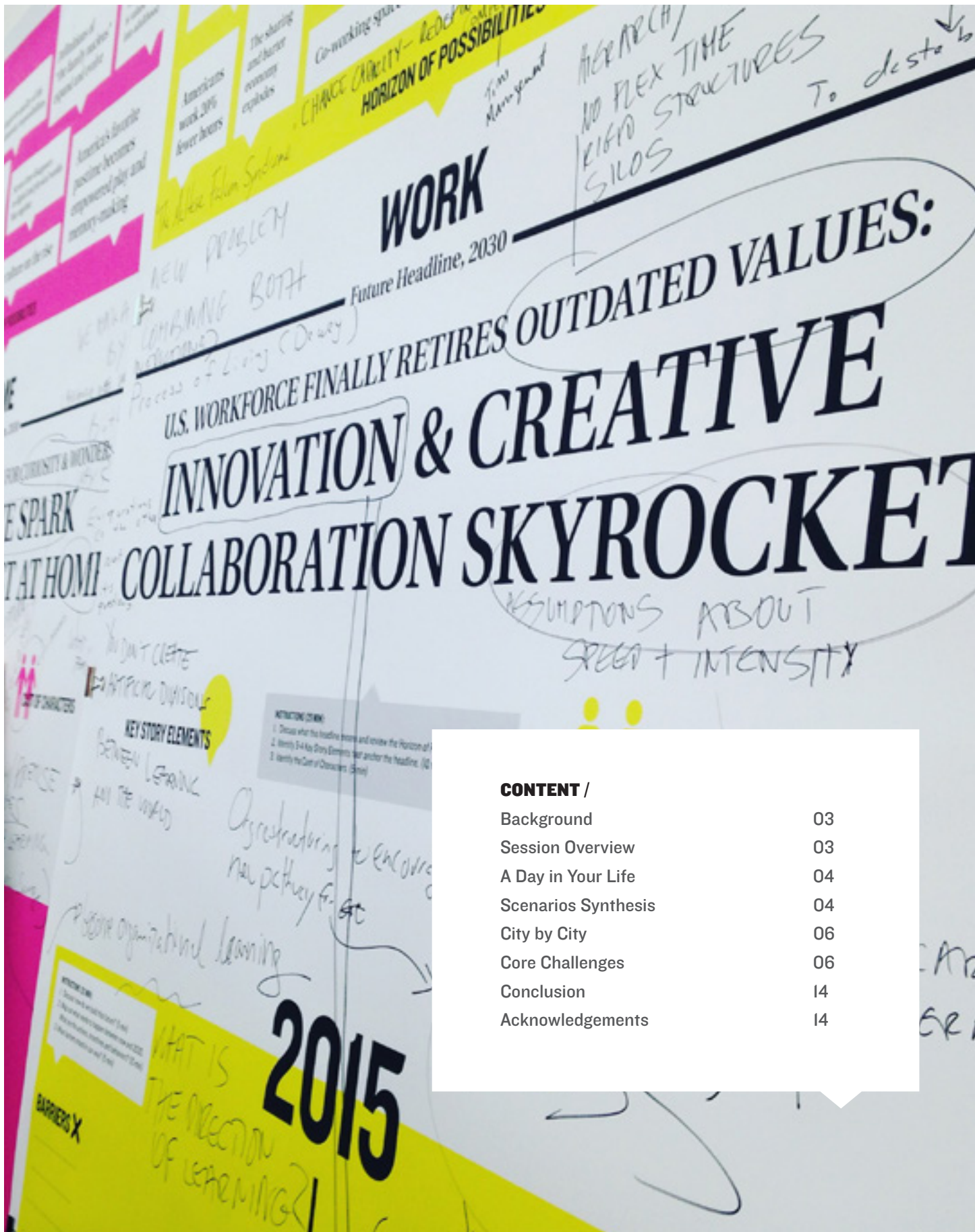


# IDEAS FROM THE FUTURE

CREATIVITY MATTERS / Chicago · Washington · Dallas / 2015





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**We have a collective responsibility  
to make a collective impact.**

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT

#### **BACKGROUND /**

Ideas from the Future is the second annual roundtable series convened by the Sam Francis Foundation, as part of *Creativity Matters* — a campaign for creativity in learning. This year's session brought thought leaders together at three cultural institutions in three cities: the MCA in Chicago, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington and the Dallas Museum of Art in Dallas. The 2015 discussion was focused on how we will mobilize creative capacity in the future. Our goals for the day included:

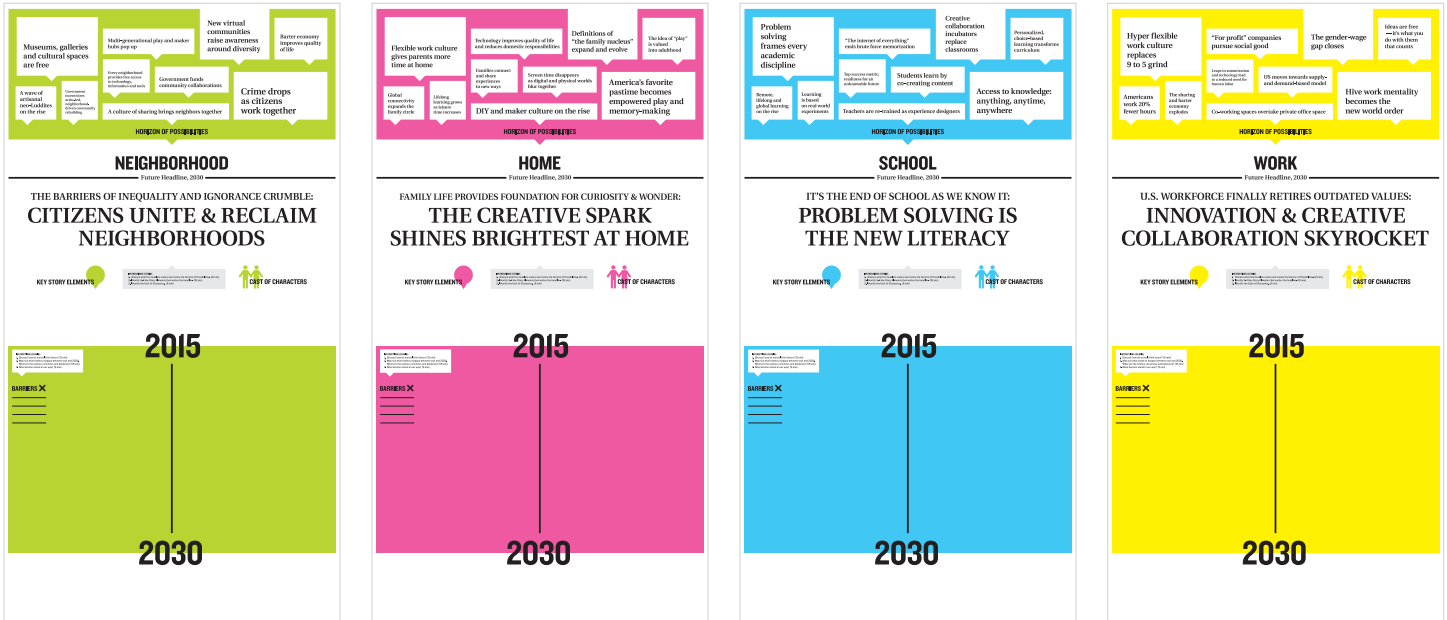
- > To have an expansive conversation about creativity
- > To connect with a like-minded network of collaborators
- > To make the time to explore where the future is headed
- > To work through how ideas can translate into actions

#### **SESSION OVERVIEW /**

Participants contributed to a half-day work session, centered on a 'scenarios building' exercise, which provided a broad-based approach to exploring creativity. Three big questions framed the session:

1. *What would it take for every American to see themselves as creative?*
2. *What has to change if we want creativity to become a core value?*
3. *How do we build a future worth sharing?*

There were between 35 and 45 participants in attendance at each session and we kicked off the morning with an icebreaker activity identifying the creative highpoints within a typical day. The rest of the session was spent mapping out the best possible future for 2030. Participants were invited to discuss creativity within smaller break out groups, in relation to four



Workshop boards

social contexts: work, home, neighborhood and school.

To anchor these conversations, each group was given a best case scenario headline from the future that they were invited to evolve by identifying: key storylines, the cast of characters, barriers, and what changes would be needed between now and 2030. We described this activity as a “choose your own adventure” that each group was empowered to shape and re-write.

**The headlines included:**

**NEIGHBORHOOD:**

The Barriers of Inequality and Ignorance Crumble: Citizens Unite and Reclaim Neighbourhoods

**HOME:**

Family Life Provides Foundation for Curiosity and Wonder: The Creative Spark Shines Brightest at Home

**SCHOOL:**

It’s the End of School as We Know It: Problem Solving is the New Literacy

**WORK:**

US Workforce Finally Retires Outdated Values: Innovation & Creative Collaboration Skyrocket

**A DAY IN YOUR LIFE: CREATIVE HIGH POINTS /**

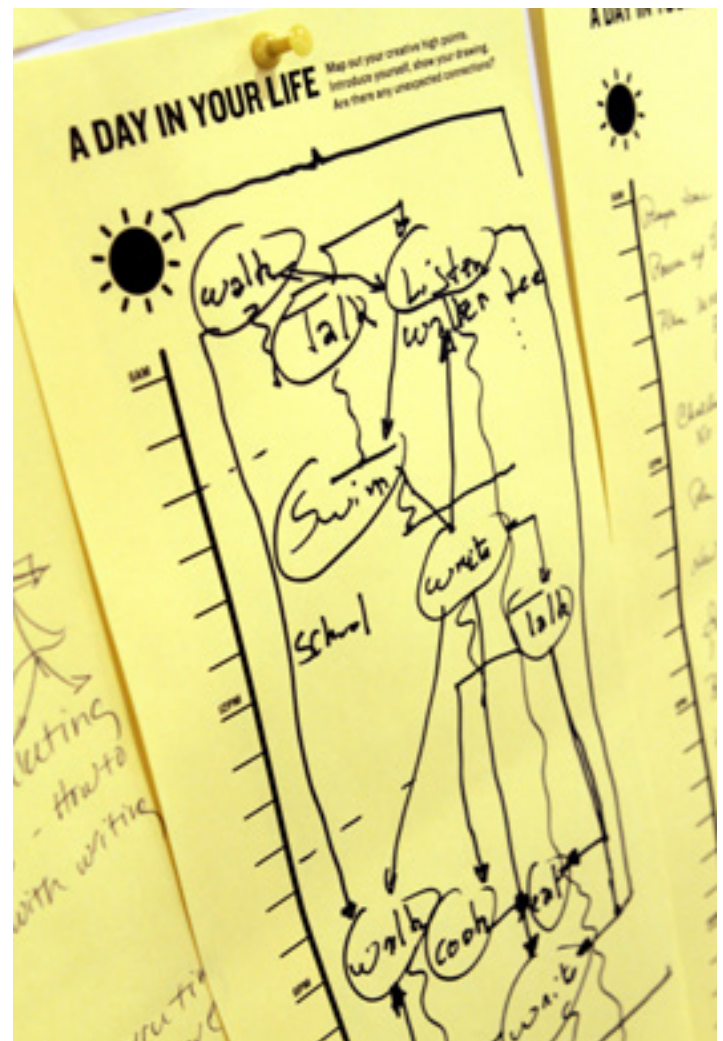
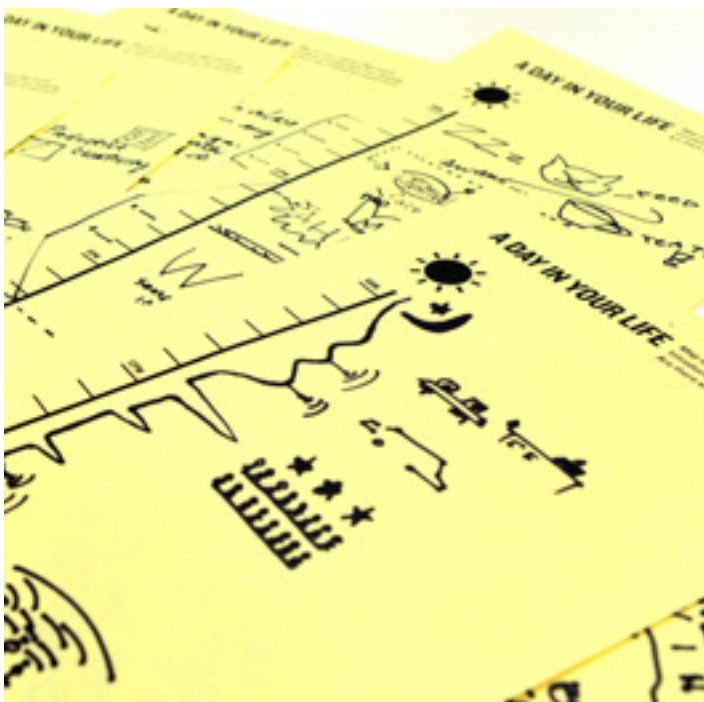
When participants mapped out how creativity manifests in a typical day most tended to write out their routine in a linear, structured manner (wake up / yoga / commute/ email etc.). Others took a more playful and illustrative approach to sketching out their highs and slumps.

For the most part, the creative highpoints were grounded in everyday solitary activities such as: meditation, exercise, gardening, daily commutes, morning showers, time spent dreaming, cooking or reading. For many, it was during these transitional times that ideas came together in exciting ways. Overall there was an acknowledged balance between individual and collaborative time. Time spent playing with children, joining in a meeting or collaborating with colleagues were important moments of creative connection.

**SCENARIOS SYNTHESIS /**

While we used home, work, neighborhood and school to anchor a conversation around creativity, we soon found these lenses to be porous and overlapping. There was a real sense of interconnectivity across every facet of civic life, and we discussed how this fluidity would only increase in the future as we continue to expand the ways that we communicate, connect and build communities.

## A Day in Your Life icebreaker sheets



As part of an introductory activity, each participant was invited to map their creative high points within a typical day and share them with the group. What became clear to every participant was that creative practice is an inherent part of everyone's day, whether consciously realized or not. The exercise reminded and validated for each person that creativity exists across all dimensions of our lives; we simply have to be attuned to it.

“  
**Diversity can  
 unite rather  
 than divide us.**

DALLAS PARTICIPANT

#### **CITY BY CITY /**

Each session brought a unique sensibility to answering the question: what should the best possible future look like? In Chicago there was a strong commitment to civic responsibility. Before leaving the group asked: how do we get organized and create critical mass? In Washington there was an action-oriented focus around how to spearhead real change within existing systems and infrastructure. One participant called for “marshalling the passion, energy and wisdom in the room” because “cultural change is what leads to reform.” Whereas in Dallas, a sense of bold optimism guided conversations around lifelong learning opportunities, new creative outlets and strategies for how “diversity can unite rather than divide us.”

#### **CORE CHALLENGES /**

Out of the work sessions a group of robust and loosely interconnected themes emerged. From these conversations we identified eight challenges that reflect the changes that need to be put in place if we want to make creativity a core social value. We also started to plan through what can be done between 2015 and 2030, if we want to build a future worth sharing.



*Chicago session*

## Cultivate a culture of caring

- > Foster empathy and compassion
- > Build intergenerational connections
- > Support a people-centered worldview

1

## Mobilize collective action

- > Share civic responsibility
- > Nurture trust and accountability within communities
- > Create awareness of collective impact

2

## Encourage risk-taking and experimentation

- > Focus on the process rather than the outcome
- > Create safe spaces that allow for failure
- > Prioritize play—from youth to retirement
- > Cultivate nimble and flexible thinking

## Imagine learning as an ecosystem

- > Embrace a lifelong continuum of learning
- > Make schools personalized, collaborative and process-driven
- > Re-frame teachers into experience designers
- > Activate learning experiences outside of classrooms

## Make work about passion and aspiration

- > Establish a work culture that supports quality of life
- > Value a corporate model committed to social good
- > Find work related to what you love
- > Re-position work as a community activity

### CREATIVITY MATTERS CORE CHALLENGES

# EIGHT CHALLENGES TO MAKE CREATIVITY A CORE SOCIAL VALUE

## Design equitable models of collaboration

- > Enable knowledge sharing and co-creation
- > Support lifelong community exchange and interaction
- > Give access to tools that activate creative collaboration
- > Strengthen local and digital networks

## Invest in systemic diversity

- > Breakdown barriers across race, gender, ability, sexuality, age and socio-economics
- > Strive for diversity by design
- > Teach inclusivity

## Reform existing social structures

- > Create a social contract based on present day values
- > Give universal access to art and culture
- > Invest in flexible and people-centered infrastructure

5

Dallas session



### 1. Cultivate a culture of caring

Empathy and meaningful connections were deemed an essential foundation for the future. A human-centered outlook on the world based on compassion, seems especially significant as we enter into an era where communications is brief, remote and dispersed.

#### Conversation points:

- > Teach young people empathy, collaboration and collective impact
- > Re-imagine the caregiver economy
- > Incentivize empathy in the workplace
- > Nurture the life skills of compassion and empathy
- > Create a stronger support network through social interaction
- > Show how empathy and compassion are vital parts of creativity
- > Build reciprocal intergenerational relationships

### 2. Mobilize collective action

This is a call to action for individuals to recognize their civic duty, rally together and make the world they want to see. To instigate positive change within our cities, citizens need to take collective ownership of the future that they want to see.

#### Conversation points:

- > Share authority and collectively generate knowledge as a society

- > Provide government incentives for community development
- > Build ownership, accountability and trust within communities
- > Provide tools for empowerment within neighborhoods
- > Engage in civic dialogue
- > Give more civic responsibility to young people

### 3. Design equitable models of collaboration

Technology has ushered in new forms of creative collaboration, knowledge-sharing, content-making and community engagement. We are poised to transform the way our communities interact and share.

#### Conversation points:

- > Build up networks and provide access to information sharing
- > Mobilize digital neighborhoods
- > Establish multigenerational spaces for building, sharing, creating, learning
- > Let technology support dialogue
- > Adopt the co-op model
- > Let creative processes become a catalyst for coming together

### 4. Invest in systemic diversity

We need to build a culture that anticipates and supports diversity. Our cities need to be designed to embrace different backgrounds, life experiences and opinions.



**Conversation points:**

- > Demand universal access across race, gender, ability, sexuality, age and socio-economics
- > Strive for diversity by design – design for difference within existing systems
- > Anticipate and welcome diverse family structures
- > Embrace difference across every part of our lives
- > Change the budget, change our tax code, change our cultural values and learning models

**5. Reform existing social structures**

While we can be resourceful and work with existing infrastructure, there is also a need to re-imagine outdated systems and values.

**Conversation points:**

- > Create a new social contract between businesses and governments
- > Invest in infrastructure that is flexible, responsive and people-centred
- > Blow up remaining distinctions between high and low culture
- > Make museums and cultural spaces free and universally accessible
- > Usher in a new breed of politicians
- > Create an expanded network of decision makers
- > Give families more free time

**6. Make work about passion and aspiration**

As the boundaries between work, family and community continue to blur - there is a demand for our professional lives to have a deeper meaning and bring about social good.

**Conversation points:**

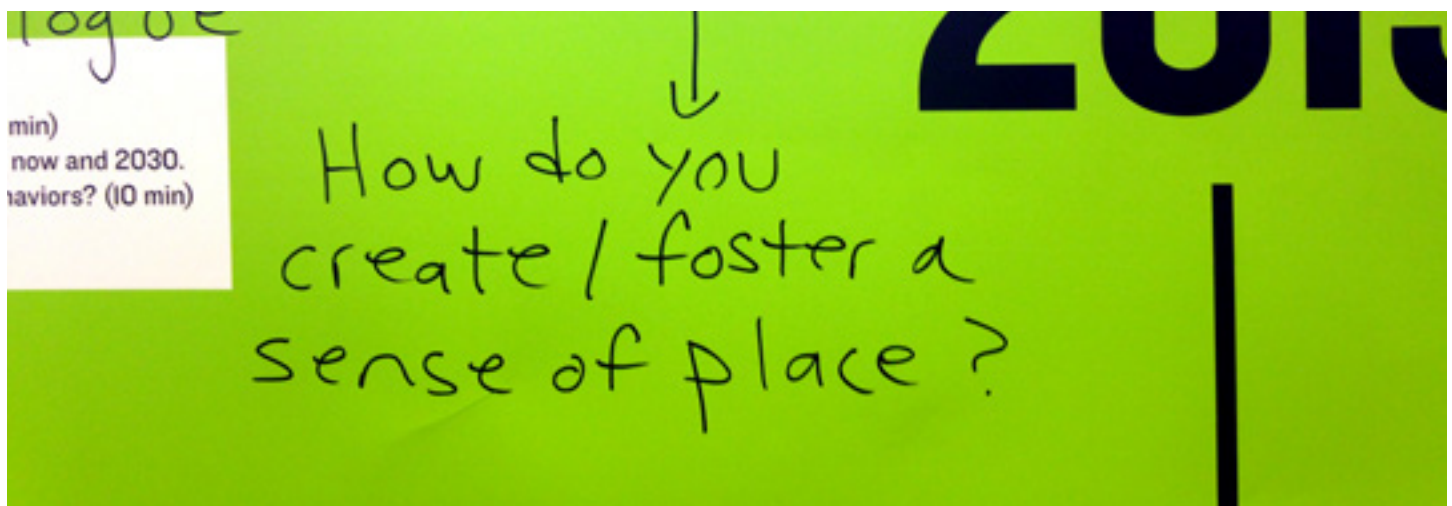
- > Make work into a community activity
- > Monitor and recognize a businesses' commitment to social good
- > Create cultures of internal feedback and public access
- > Design a new model of progress – based on a collective effect instead of advancing the individual
- > Shift the concept of “work” to “engagement”
- > Make human connections and friendship the basis for work
- > Adopt a needs-based compensation model
- > Work only on the things you care about
- > Work environments that support quality time and family life

**7. Imagine learning as an ecosystem**

We are ready to establish a continuum of learning—from childhood through to retirement. These experiences can be personalized, empowered, collaborative and about process rather than output.

**Conversation points:**

- > Create an interconnected ecosystem of learning where traditional schooling is one of many options
- > Make education a basic human right
- > Reframe teachers as experience designers
- > The role of the teacher becomes a facilitator, curator, instigator and coach
- > Encourage free thinking at home
- > Abolish standardized testing
- > Make learning about real world experiences
- > Empower students to teach





*Debra Burchett-Lere, Sam Francis Foundation*



- > Nurture self-directed learning opportunities
- > Create places of employment that value learning outside of specialist expertise

### **8. Encourage risk-taking and experimentation**

Given that the future is unpredictable, complex and changing—we need to learn how to think and adapt in new ways. The capacity to be agile in our thinking is a necessary building block for responding to tomorrow's challenge.

#### **Conversation points:**

- > Start a public awareness campaign that changes the paradigm of who is creative
- > Celebrate experimentation and failure
- > Give families time to be more creative with each other
- > Reveal the hidden creative impulse in the everyday
- > Provide exposure to new ideas, people and ways of working
- > Create more flexibility across work, life and learning
- > Make content secondary to the “how” or process
- > Incentives for people who are using creativity in their homes
- > Prioritize play

CHICAGO / MCA

“We need radical educational reform”

“Creative processes should bring communities together”

“Don’t create divisions between learning and the world”

“Let’s do work that propels quality of life”



WASHINGTON / The Hirshhorn

“We want a culture that embraces problem solving”

“Co-creation with communities, not for communities”

“We need people-centered infrastructure”



Learners will inherit the world white knowers will be prepared for a world that no longer exists  
-Alister Smith


DALLAS / DMA

“We need a social good corporate model”

“Innovation is an urge at every age”

“Creativity comes out of tensions and problems”





**How do we amplify and capitalize on what's happening. How do we ensure that these conversations continue? We need to be all in this together.**

WASHINGTON PARTICIPANT

#### **CONCLUSION /**

This summary document provides a preliminary synthesis of the roundtable series that is but one output within the larger Creativity Matters initiative. Our next step is to synthesize these core challenges into a creative practice playbook, which will provide tactics and strategies for how to build creative capacity.

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS /**

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- > The Creativity Matters initiative is spearheaded by Community Works on behalf of the Sam Francis Foundation.
- > Bespoke Cultural Collective facilitated and designed the roundtable series.

#### **SPECIAL THANKS TO /**

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