



By Heather Sinclair

In March of 2011 the Creative Enterprise Enabling Organization (CEEEO) officially began operations. At our centre we have on-going partnerships with our founders who include the regional municipalities and Prosperity Council members, CTT, Communitech and the Chambers of Commerce for Cambridge and Greater Kitchener-Waterloo. The Greater KW Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and Communitech are worthy of mention at this time, in light of two exciting collaborations with CEEEO that will net tangible benefits to the community.

The Chamber and CEEEO have been working together to develop a group benefits program that will specifically benefit the local creative sector. The intent behind the program is to provide access to cost-effective health and dental benefits. It is anticipated that we will be able to launch this program early in the New Year. Final details to sort include a special introductory offer for local small businesses that fall within the creative sector and how we support those individuals who may require assistance tapping into the program. Thank-you to the Cowan Insurance Group of Companies for their support.

Since its early operations, the Accelerator Centre and Communitech have been critical supporters of CEEEO. Both organizations have facilitated our space needs and access to resources. The reason behind this collaboration is the recognition that the fusion of art and technology is a key driver for both sectors. This collaboration will enable local artists, events and cultural organizations to engage in creative activities within both ecosystems and will reap significant benefits. CEEEO is developing a community advisory committee, made up of local artists and cultural organizations, to inform this programming on a year-round basis. This gets artists and their work inside the Communitech Network and exposes technology professionals to the talents of the creative sector. To build audiences outside of the Tannery, CEEEO and Communitech are developing a pilot program for a Cultural Pass which will allow Communitech Members streamlined access to the region's cultural offerings. CEEEO will then work with the broader community to evolve this pilot to a wider base across the Region.

The access to the benefits program helps with stability and capacity, and these other projects will build audiences for local work, exhibition and performance, while enlivening, enabling and growing the region's cultural landscape. It is just a small part of the much-larger vision that the community has asked for; to make Waterloo Region a place to work, play and stay. CEEEO, in partnership with the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce, the Accelerator Centre, Communitech, Waterloo Regional Tourism and CTT are committed to this mission, as we continue to help drive capacity and showcase the power of our Regions' creative offerings and the important role they play in the future of our prosperity and innovations yet to come.