

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN HALL MEETING TO FOCUS ON PLANNING FOR CANAAN'S FUTURE  
RESIDENTS INVITED TO LEARN ABOUT COMMUNITY HEART & SOUL™

CANAAN, Vt. (October 19, 2015)—Representatives from the town of Canaan are inviting all residents to a town hall meeting on Canaan's future. The purpose of the meeting is to introduce residents to Community Heart & Soul™, a community development method that town leaders would like to use to create a roadmap for Canaan's future.

The meeting is 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Wednesday, October 28 at the Canaan school gym. Light refreshments and childcare will be provided.

"Canaan community leaders are committed to demonstrating the community's vigor to use Community Heart & Soul to enhance and expand the community's assets," said Canaan Select Board Member Greg Noyes. "Canaan recognizes that our community has assets and abilities to discover, build and leverage so Canaan can sparkle as a destination for 21<sup>st</sup> century economic opportunities in the grand northeast corner of Vermont."

Community Heart & Soul is an approach to community development and planning developed by the Vermont-based Orton Family Foundation that increases participation in local decision-making and invites residents to shape the future of their communities based on what matters most to them. Other Heart & Soul communities have seen the process build leadership, boost volunteerism, bridge divides, create partnerships, preserve historical sites, increase resources for k-12 education and strengthen economies.

More than a dozen towns in Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Montana, Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island and Vermont have worked with Orton Family Foundation on Community Heart & Soul projects.

"This approach increases participation in local decision-making and reminds residents they have the power to shape the future of their communities in a way that upholds the unique

character of each place,” said Orton Family Foundation Senior Associate of Programs Leanne Tingay.

Support for the project would come, in part, from the Orton Family Foundation and New Hampshire Charitable Foundation’s Tilloston Fund. Representatives from both organizations will be at the meeting.

Here’s how Heart & Soul has helped towns across the country:

- Biddeford, Maine: More than \$20 million in investment downtown; 90 new businesses.
- Cortez, Colorado: Long-standing cultural barriers were replaced with a spirit of cooperation. City planners adopted a new way to do business. Instead of asking residents to come to city hall, the city went to them, bringing residents and developers together in neighborhoods in a way that was valued by both.
- Gardiner, Maine: More than \$800,000 in Community Development Block Grants for a food co-op, a beef, lamb and pork facility, and a craft cider operation.
- Polson, Montana: A new food co-op not only created a market for local farmers’ meat and produce, thanks to Heart & Soul, a community center was also created with programs for youth and adults.

For more information, contact Diana Rancourt, Town of Canaan Assistant Town Clerk at 802-266-3370 or [drancourt@canaanschools.org](mailto:drancourt@canaanschools.org).