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**Young Creatives Launch into Action on Regional Projects**

**Dayton, Ohio** – On Thursday, May 7, regional young professionals and local students got to work tackling projects they deemed as important to a vibrant and livable region. Hosted by updayton, the action launch session focused on four projects including: a comprehensive Web site for regional information, programs to engage local youth in after-school activities, an initiative to help Wayne Avenue become more pedestrian-friendly, and a focus on ways to promote growth in downtown Dayton.

Less than three weeks previously, over 200 students and young professionals gathered at the Convention Center for the Young Creatives Summit to brainstorm ideas and vote on potential projects. These four ideas were voted as top priorities. The action plan launch provided the tools for participants to further develop the ideas.

The evening started with food and socializing among the volunteers, but updayton project lead Scott Murphy called attention to the task at hand slightly after 6 PM. Murphy welcomed the participants, set the agenda for the evening, and challenged the groups to determine specific tasks which may move them toward meeting the greater goals. Murphy thanked the participants saying, "It's one thing to go to a Summit and share our ideas, but it's something more to show up and say, 'I want to make this happen.'"

At the online resource hub table, people were busy discussing the best way to create a regional Web page that would be "the" online presence for people "whether they've been in Dayton for 2 hours or 20 years."

The Wayne Avenue Corridor group plans to connect the Wayne Avenue area assets to create a unique destination that gives the area a specific identity. They have both beautification and community involvement projects on their list of short term goals.

The group focusing on working with area youth has targeted middle and high school youth; they plan to connect the school kids with helpful and healthy activities after school. After learning more about projects already implemented in the region, they will work to raise awareness among the school-aged population.

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The “Grow Downtown Dayton” project tackled a broad and varied task, but they are already determining small steps that they might take to accomplish their goals. Overall goals include finding ways to make the city more “user-friendly” and give all people throughout the region a reason to come to the city. This group has short term goals including helping to promote existing projects, encouraging more involvement from college students, and hosting a contest for the best “Why I love Dayton” videos.

Many regional organizations are currently working toward similar goals, and the updayton volunteers will be further researching those efforts. Every group cited research and teaming with area partners as a first step and top priority so as not to ‘re-invent the wheel.’ Although the projects will be completely guided by the initiative of the group members, numerous businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders have already pledged to support in many ways – including offering fiscal support, expertise, resources, and space.

Dayton's numerous universities & highly skilled students give it more talent potential than most anywhere in the state, but too many graduates are slipping away. Each young, creative professional that leaves the region is a missed economic opportunity. At the Summit, Dayton’s diverse and innovative young creatives proposed their ideas to help the region better serve young talent and plug the brain drain. The launch session encouraged young leaders to emerge and required further details on how to accomplish the large-scale goals. A follow-up session will be scheduled in June so that groups may report back on their challenges, successes, and advancements.

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*An initiative of the DaytonCREATE project, updayton strives to spur economic growth within the region by attracting and retaining young talent. updayton is connecting young creative professionals to the Miami Valley and engaging them in the region’s decision making.*

**We are updayton. Our members are of all ages, and we are passionate about building a better Dayton. When someone asks us where we live, we are proud to call Dayton our home.**