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How Entrepreneurship Is Changing Urban Environments

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs have always provided America the impetus for dynamic economic growth and change. The industrial revolution transformed the country from an agricultural, rural-based economy to an automated production oriented economy which moved the United States towards a more urban-city focused society. In today's world, the advent of the Internet and digital technology has completely changed the way we live, work, play, how we form relationships and other aspects of life.

Entrepreneurship is the catalyst for great change.

During the past week I have witnessed entrepreneurship as a source for change once again. In Chester, PA, I was part of a group convened by the Widener University Small Business Development Center and Widener University School of Business to discuss support for and to tour the burgeoning arts community in downtown Chester.



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acy, President of The Barred Rock Fund and former President of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream.

Judy Wicks at economic development strategy



What's turning out to be a potential transformation of the area is being facilitated by entrepreneurs from the city's passionate arts community. Previously unoccupied, dilapidated store fronts have been re-birthed as art studios, a performing arts theater, artist workshops, entertainment venues and cafes. An area of the city known for high crime and desolation is becoming a destination for family outings, leisure and shopping.



On Tuesday, I traveled to the Washington, D.C. to serve on an advisory team to the **Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO)** on its youth entrepreneurship initiative.

AEO is the trade association for organizations serving the financial and technical assistance needs of America's micro-businesses.



The organization's has embarked on creating an ecosystem of services and service delivery models for youth (or young adults) 18-24 to assist them in starting businesses as an option that addresses unemployment in this population. Recently, AEO completed a study examining youth's interest and thoughts regarding entrepreneurship and found there is a large percentage of those in this demographic that embrace the idea owning a business as the best option for their future.

Earl Boyd with Ingrid Gorman, Director of Research & Insights for AEO

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Our team of advisers was assembled to provide ideas on services and service delivery models in response to the survey's findings. AEO's approach to youth unemployment is another example of entrepreneurship playing a role in facilitating change.

In summary, entrepreneurship has always been the source of change in societies and will continue to do so in many aspects of our lives. The entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity. The artist in Chester definitely reflect these characteristics in their efforts to revitalize downtown. Change is happening there.

As the U.S. attempts to adjust to the fast changing employment landscape and the trend toward outsourcing task to independent contractors, entrepreneurship is becoming a real option for more and more young adults.

Entrepreneurship is a catalyst for change.

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