

Young Dayton adults strive to help the city thrive

By [Kim Margolis](#), Staff Writer

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DAYTON — Two years ago, urban researcher Richard Florida shared his Creative Class theories with the people of Dayton.

In his book, “The Rise of the Creative Class” he said communities which will thrive in the future will use the talents of people who think artistically. They don’t have to be literal artists, they just have to be eclectic thinkers, he said.

DaytonCREATE was born out of Florida’s creative class concept and it has gone on to create burgeoning groups and events locally.

The second Young Creatives Summit, which was held earlier this month, is one such event. Sponsored by updayton, an initiative of DaytonCREATE, young adults split up into groups and planned practical projects that could make the city more vibrant and liveable. Last year’s summit led to a clean-up of Wayne Avenue between Third and Fifth Streets, along with the painting of 10 murals.

Revitalizing a city that has suffered major setbacks isn’t an easy task and the groups deal with plenty of naysayers. Still, members of the group remain positive.

“I think there is more positive than negative,” said Andre Wilson, updayton vice chair. “I don’t think we do as much with the community to push it up. Negativity, unfortunately is easier to spread than positivity.”

Carla Hale, 23, attended the summit and sees the city making progress. She’s had friends move back to the city, getting homes in the Art Institute and Belmont areas.

Hale will soon join that group. She and her husband live in Miamisburg, but she misses Dayton, where she grew up. She’s moving to Walnut Hills in a few months.

“I’m a huge, huge advocate of Dayton and living in Dayton,” she said. “To really see change in a place you have to live and grow in the place.”

Wilson, 26, moved to the city two years ago from Indianapolis. He loves the city and quickly became involved in working on its image after attending the Young Creatives Summit last year.

“To me it’s about change,” Wilson said. “The success of Dayton is success of the region. That’s why I like updayton. It’s about talking and taking action.”

Then there’s Kenton Curtis, Jr. who grew up in Dayton and has never considered leaving. He’s visited other cities and seen what they have to offer and thinks Dayton matches up.

It’s just about putting the pieces together, said the 29-year-old.

“I believe it already has what it needs. This has always been a place of innovation, even if you go back

to the Wright Brothers,” he said. “If we’re going to live here, we’re going to make it the best we can.”

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