



**TORONTO COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

The Art of Wise Giving™

## News Release

### **Time to stand up for Toronto and build the city we all want**

TORONTO, October 4, 2011- Toronto is the fourth most livable city in the world, according to *The Economist*, but the city is a divided one both economically and socially. The Toronto Community Foundation's 10<sup>th</sup> annual Toronto's Vital Signs® Report cites some startling predictions that, if not addressed, could result in a diminished quality of life for 60% of the population by 2025.

"Toronto is recognized internationally for offering a quality of life where residents can live, breathe, work and prosper together in harmony," said Rahul K. Bhardwaj, Toronto Community Foundation President & CEO. "Our financial indicators are strong – even when other cities are still grappling with the economic downturn. But, the Report tells us that 'a rising tide does not raise all boats'."

Under the "Gap Between Rich and Poor" section of Toronto's Vital Signs®, a projection of current neighbourhood income trends to 2025 predicts an almost complete disappearance of the city's middle income neighbourhoods. Currently over one million residents live in Toronto's low and very low income neighbourhoods.

As the social and economic divide widens in the city, the Report also uncovers a ripple effect for some of the additional areas critical to the overall well-being of residents. In brief, the areas of weakness include:

**Learning** - Students in Toronto schools with a high proportion of students living below the poverty line are less likely to have access to the support and enrichment paid for by fundraising.

**Work** - Unemployment rates for both youth and immigrants remain high, and employers are losing out on what this attractive labour force has to offer the city.

**Getting Around** - Neighbourhoods with highest incomes have almost four times better transit service than those with lowest incomes in Toronto's transit deserts.

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**Getting Started in Toronto** - Immigrants in the Toronto Region continue to suffer from the effects of the recession, reflected in sustained high unemployment.

**Health and Wellness** - The urban physical environment worsens health inequalities in Toronto.

**Housing** - The Toronto Region remains in the ranks of 'severely' unaffordable housing markets – one of six in Canada.

**Leadership, Civic Engagement and Belonging** – The votes of thousands of Toronto's new immigrants count for less, as vote dilution lessens the influence of urban issues in federal politics.

But, there is a positive side to Toronto's story, and it is side that Bhardwaj wants Torontonians to stand up for.

PricewaterhouseCoopers ranks Toronto second among 26 globally competitive cities in the areas of intellectual capital, innovation, health, safety and security.

The world sees Toronto has a top destination pick – second after only New York City. Close to 10 million overnight visitors generated \$4.3 million in direct municipal taxes in 2010.

With strong financial indicators, the Toronto Region took first place on the CIBC economic activity index of 25 major Canadian metropolitan regions.

"Toronto is a special place and we are in a special position to build the city we all want – smarter, healthier, more inclusive, more creative, more prosperous. Collaboration, compassion and compromise are values that make us a magnet for the world," said Bhardwaj. "We need a vision for our city that sees us through for the long-term. And, the world needs us to succeed."

To download the full Toronto's Vital Signs® Report, for a glossary of terms and list of sources, visit [www.tcf.ca](http://www.tcf.ca).

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Toronto's Vital Signs® is a consolidated snapshot of the trends and issues affecting the quality of life in our city. The Report is compiled from current statistics and special studies. Each of the 11 interconnected issue areas is critical to the well-being of our city and its residents.

The Report aims to: inspire civic engagement, provide focus for public debate, guide donors and stakeholders who want to direct their resources to areas of greatest need and greatest impact. Since Toronto's first Vital Signs publication in 2001, the Report has been adopted by 22 communities across Canada.

With more than 325 endowment funds and assets under administration of more than \$250 million, the Toronto Community Foundation is one of Canada's largest public charitable foundations. Our mission is to connect philanthropy to community needs and opportunities, all with a vision to make Toronto the best place to live, work, learn and grow, through the power of giving.

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