

From Vital Signs to Building Vital Communities Community Foundation gives insight & supports community's most pressing needs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 6, 2009 - Guelph (ON) – At a dual-purpose event today, [The Guelph Community Foundation](#) (GCF) shone a spotlight on the community's most pressing issues and announced grants to help alleviate the hardship.

It was the second year The Foundation released its Vital Signs[®] Report to the Community. It compiles existing research for 11 issue areas that are then graded via a community survey. This year, 400 people in Guelph & Wellington County responded to the on-line survey, giving them an opportunity to highlight areas of greatest concern and celebrate factors for which they are proudest. Sure to raise the most discussion in this year's report is the "Gap between rich and poor" indicator which highlights the dismal local statistics for Social Assistance and Employment Insurance.

That's exactly the point says Hugh Guthrie, Chair of GCF's Board of Directors "The entire Vital Signs[®] process - from the survey itself, to the reader-friendly data, to the discussion after the release – it's all meant to raise awareness in our community about some of the key statistics in areas like work, safety, gap between rich and poor, housing, etc. and to generate discussion and focus around solutions for areas where the need is most pressing," he said. "With respect to the employment statistics, we hope the community, employers and all levels of government use Vital Signs[®] as a springboard for discussion and informed action."

That's how last year's local Vital Signs[®] was used. For example, the recently launched Guelph Wellness Initiative took some of its direction from the report. Some service clubs requested special presentations and additional copies of the report.

The Guelph Community Foundation itself turned to 2008 Vital Signs[®] when it invited grant applications that focused on poverty alleviation under the banner "Building Vital Communities. Those grant announcements, totalling \$50,000 to be directed to 7 programs, constituted the second part of today's event. Programs receiving funding included The Food Project, an initiative of Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County. It was among the many grant applications that addressed the critical issue of food security. "There are children in our community who go hungry every day. The Food Project allows us to work with neighbourhood groups to increase the opportunities for families to access food cupboards, community kitchens, garden fresh boxes and community gardens. The Building Vital Communities Grant contributes to our efforts towards securing healthy meals for all the children in our community, every day," said Daniel Moore, Executive Director of Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County.

A full list of grants announced today (after 7:00 pm) is available at www.guelphcf.ca

Relatively new to the job, Guelph Community Foundation Executive Director, Andrea Olson had this to say about today's event: "The Vital Signs data shows this has been an extremely difficult year financially for our community which has placed considerable strain on many programs. Yet, I am continually inspired by the generosity and philanthropic vision of our donors and the creativity and energy of our community agencies and leaders. Today's event is *all* about community and the collective efforts and goodwill of so very many – the countless individuals who provided assistance to Vital Signs so that we can better understand our community and those who work daily to build the vitality of Guelph & Wellington County."

About The Guelph Community Foundation

The Guelph Community Foundation is an independent, volunteer-driven charitable foundation whose purpose is to provide leadership in promoting community philanthropy and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Guelph and Wellington. The Foundation pools the charitable gifts of many donors into permanent, income-earning endowments. Income from the endowments supports a wide range of charitable programs and activities. The Foundation currently has \$6.4 Million in pooled assets and since its inception just 9 years ago has disbursed close to \$1.5 Million in grants to community organisations.

About Vital Signs & Community Foundations

Canada's 165 community foundations are local charitable foundations that help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work, and play. Together we are one of the largest supporters of Canadian communities, providing \$169 million in support of local priorities and organizations in 2008. To find out more visit www.cfc-fcc.ca.

The national Vital Signs project is based on Toronto's Vital Signs® an extremely successful indicator report developed by Toronto Community Foundation, which was first published in 2001. Since expanding to the national scene in 2006, Vital Signs has become the platform for local action among a wide range of community leaders, including governments, not-for-profits, philanthropists, the private sector, and individual citizens. On October 6th, 16 communities, including Guelph & Wellington will launch their report including: Victoria, Central Okanagan, Sunshine Coast, Boundary Communities BC, Calgary, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Toronto, Waterloo Region, Oakville, Kingston, Ottawa, Sudbury, Wolfville, and St. John.

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