

**October 6, 2009**

## **Checkup 2009**

### **The Community Foundation of Ottawa releases fourth annual Ottawa's Vital Signs report**

Did you know that:

- suicide was identified as the leading cause of death amongst men between the ages of 20 – 44 in Ottawa according to a 2006 report;
- more than one in five people with disabilities are living in poverty in Ottawa;
- there are 24 Ottawa River Valley species at risk of becoming endangered;
- 5,078 personal bankruptcies were declared in Ottawa last year;
- 75.3% of high-school students in Ottawa and surrounding areas reported alcohol use in 2007, and 36.4% reported using cannabis over a 12-month period?

These are just a few of the key findings in the 2009 *Ottawa's Vital Signs* report, the Community Foundation of Ottawa's fourth annual report card on the health of our city. Since the report's launch in 2006, a wide-cross section of the community has graded each of the indicators. This year, graders were also asked to identify their top three priority areas for action in the report, ranking *Health and Wellness* as their top priority. Tied for second place were the *Gap between Rich and Poor* and *Housing*, and in third place was the *Environment*. "The graders' selection of priorities based on the findings in this year's report is indicative of the quality-of-life issues that are on the minds of many people in our city," says Barbara McInnes, President & CEO of the Community Foundation of Ottawa.

*Ottawa's Vital Signs* measures the community's quality of life in 11 key areas, including: the Gap between Rich and Poor; Safety; Health and Wellness; Learning; Housing; Getting Started in the Community; Arts and Culture; Environment; Work; Belonging and Leadership; and Getting Around. A compilation of data from numerous research sources, *Ottawa's Vital Signs* is a comprehensive annual checkup that identifies significant trends and issues in our community.

As a vehicle to engage the entire community on issues of importance, *Ottawa's Vital Signs* was designed to stimulate public dialogue on how we can work together to make our city better. "Community engagement has always been a key part of producing *Ottawa's Vital Signs*," says Ms. McInnes, "which is why we're particularly excited about hosting our first public "Checkup" event later this month, which will consist of a panel discussion and community conversation about local issues. We hope everyone who cares about improving our city for the benefit of all will come out and have their say."

Join us for **Checkup 2009: A Community Conversation** on Tuesday, October 20 from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. at the Ottawa Public Library Auditorium, 120 Metcalfe St. Hosted and moderated by **Kathleen Petty** of CBC Radio's *Ottawa Morning*, the panel will consist of **Caroline Andrew**, University of Ottawa professor at the School of Political Studies and Director of the Centre on Governance; **Ken Gray**, Ottawa Citizen columnist and Editorial Page editor; and **Carl Nicholson**, Executive Director of the Catholic Immigration Centre of Ottawa.

*Ottawa's Vital Signs* is part of a national initiative led by Community Foundations of Canada through which 16 communities across the country will release Vital Signs reports on the same day. These cities include

Victoria, BC; Central Okanagan, BC; Sunshine Coast, BC; Boundary Communities, BC; Calgary, AB; Medicine Hat, AB; Red Deer, AB; Sudbury, ON; Toronto, ON; Oakville, ON; Guelph and Wellington, ON; Waterloo, ON; Kingston, ON; Ottawa, ON; Wolfville, NS; and Saint John, NB.

The Community Foundation of Ottawa is a public, non-profit organization created by and for the people of Ottawa. It connects donors who care with causes that matter and serves as a trusted resource for addressing issues and leveraging opportunities in the community. It attracts and manages a growing endowment, the invested earnings of which provide grants to charitable organizations.

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