



WOLFVILLE'S

# WCF Vital Signs®

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**Wolfville, NS – October 7, 2009** The Wolfville Community Fund (WCF) has launched its 2009 Vital Signs® report. The launch was held on October 6, 2009 at a community breakfast provided by the WCF at the Lion's Community Hall in Wolfville. Over 70 local residents attended the event including Mayor Bob Stead, a number of Town Councillors, the president of Acadia University, Mr. Ray Ivany, the head of the Wolfville Business Development Commission, Mr. Peter Herbin, and representatives from local non-profit organizations such as L'Arche Homefires. All were interested in learning about what Wolfville is doing well and where it needs to improve.

Vital Signs® is an annual community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities, identifies significant trends, and assigns grades in at least ten issue areas critical to quality of life. Wolfville's Vital Signs® is a reader-friendly report which covers *Getting Started & Belonging, the Economy, Getting Around, Housing, Health & Wellness, Learning, Arts & Recreation, Safety, and the Environment* using data obtained from Statistics Canada and other credible sources.

Wolfville's Vital Signs® is the first report of its kind to be produced in Nova Scotia. Dick Groot, Chair of the WCF says, "We wanted to produce a Vital Signs® report for Wolfville in order to separate fact from fiction and provide the community with local information on a wide range of topics that are very relevant to our everyday lives." He adds "The Vital Signs® project will benefit the WCF and others as it helps us to know more about the issues and opportunities in our Town. We can now share this information with our donors and establish grant programs that are aimed directly at the issues which community members themselves tell us are important to them, based on the data we've collected."

## Wolfville's Vital Signs – Highlights

### The Good

- Wolfville's high school completion rates are approximately twice as better than the provincial and national rates.
- Ridership on the Public Transit system is increasing (2008 figures).
- Public library usage is on the rise (2007 figures).
- Wolfville has a higher than average proportion of visible minorities compared to the provincial rate (2006 figures).
- Wolfville's charitable giving rate was higher than the provincial and national averages (2007 figures).

### The Not So Good

- Wolfville's economic growth rate between 2001 and 2006 was far below provincial and national levels, while its unemployment rate in 2006 exceeded both the provincial and national levels.
- Wolfville's overall poverty rate (using the Low Income Measure) is higher than the provincial and national averages (2006 figures). The child pre-tax poverty rate (based on Low Income Cut Off Index) in 2006 was about 25% higher than the provincial and national levels.
- The Wolfville Area Food Bank has experienced a 40% increase in activity in 2008 compared to 2007.
- Males in Wolfville make 1.96 times the income of females (2006 figures). In 2001, males made 1.91 times the income of females.
- The physical activity of residents is on the decline (2008 figures).
- Two of Wolfville's major employers – Acadia University and Landmark East School are experiencing declining enrolments.

“Over 100 people were involved in putting the 2009 Vital Signs® report together in Wolfville, commented Allison Kouzovnikov, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia which houses the WCF. “It speaks volumes about the significant level of community participation in Wolfville and the concern of its citizens about the community’s welfare.”

Vital Signs® was initiated by the Toronto Community Foundation eight years ago and is now a national initiative led by Community Foundations of Canada. Today, a total of 16 communities across Canada launched their Vital Signs® reports. The national Vital Signs® report has revealed troubling data with respect to the youth jobless rate, aboriginal high school completion rates, and low birth weights.

Closer to home, Wolfville’s Vital Signs® report confirms that there is much to be happy about in Wolfville, but also highlights some surprising and disturbing facts about economic and health inequalities, particularly child poverty.

“The first Vital Signs® report for Wolfville urges us to be more aware of our community through analysis and exploration, to celebrate what is good, to seek to improve that which needs attention, and in the process enrich the lives of all our residents,” commented Bob Stead, the Mayor of Wolfville and former Chairman of the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia.

The WCF will host a public meeting in mid-November to receive the community’s feedback on the Vital Signs® report and to set priorities for the coming year. As WCF member, Dr. Ron Stuart sums it up, “We’ve only just begun.”

The Wolfville Community Fund is a permanent endowment fund established by and for the people of Wolfville. It is part of the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia which is an independent public foundation and registered charity and also part of a network of 165 community foundations across Canada.

*For more information on **Wolfville’s Vital Signs® 2009**, please contact:*  
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