

CANADA'S Vital Signs® Giving Guide

Community foundations across Canada are using Vital Signs to identify priorities and take action to improve local quality of life

Getting more out of your charitable giving

Canada was recently named one of the most generous countries in the world by the World Giving Index. We willingly donate our money to worthy causes, but surveys here at home show we're not getting as much as we could from our giving.

Recent research focusing on Canada's affluent baby boom generation shows that nearly half of those surveyed said they donate on impulse, without a plan or budget. And while more than four out of five boomers say charitable giving is a rewarding and educational family experience, only 15 per cent involve their children in the decision-making process.

But a newly published series of reports about the quality of life in Canadian communities could be just the ticket to jumpstarting your charitable giving plan.

Community foundations across Canada recently released their local and national Vital Signs reports, which provide Canadians with reader-friendly snapshots of how we're doing in key areas that affect our quality of life – from health, education and housing, to work,

the environment, and the arts.

Sixteen communities released Vital Signs reports this year and a national report was also produced. The program was first launched by the Toronto Community Foundation in 2001 and spread to community foundations across Canada in 2005.

"Vital Signs reports are meant to act as catalysts in our communities," says Monica Patten, President and CEO of Community Foundations of Canada, which co-ordinates the national program. "They provide citizens, community organizations, local leaders and would-be donors with a ready-made opportunity to discuss the issues and opportunities facing our country right now."

"We're all so pressed for time, but the Vital Signs program makes it easy to identify high-impact ways to give," says Marvi Ricker, VP & Managing Director of Philanthropic Services for BMO Harris Private Banking. "It's a great conversation starter, whether



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you're at the kitchen table with your kids, or sitting in your investment advisor's office."

Ms. Ricker, who along with BMO's Retirement Institute led the baby boomer research, is a strong believer in creating your own charitable giving plan.

"Successful giving requires as much thought as saving or investing," she says. "If you want your giving to have an impact, or if you want to involve your family, you have to make time to become familiar with the problems in your

Connecting Canadians to community needs

Vital Signs is just one of the ways that community foundations connect Canadians to community needs. Each of the country's more than 170 community foundations is home to a wealth of local expertise and experience about local issues and organizations.

If you're looking for advice or ideas for charitable giving, get in touch with the community foundation nearest you. You can find a full list at www.cfc-fcc.ca.

To find out more about how Canadian communities are faring, visit the Canada's Vital Signs website at www.vitalsignscanada.ca.

Community foundations share local stories, ideas and opportunities all year round. During the month of October the Vital Signs blog will feature community foundation leaders and other local experts from a wide range of fields including:

- Andrew Sharpe, Centre for the Study of Living Standards
- Peter Paul, ALLIES (Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies)
- Dianne Fehr, Immigrant Access Fund Society of Alberta
- Jane Londerville, University of Guelph
- Christiane Mitchell, Canada Without Poverty
- Paul Cappon and Erin Mills, Canadian Council on Learning
- Lynne Slotek, Canadian Index of Wellbeing
- Marvi Ricker, BMO Harris Private Banking
- Judith Maxwell, leading thinker on Canada's social and economic policy
- Karen Takacs, Canadian Crossroads International
- Paul Born, Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement
- Mary-Lou Donnelly, Canadian Teachers' Federation

■ You can learn more about Vital Signs at www.vitalsignscanada.ca.

LEARNING

Every Child Counts in this community

Victoria Foundation

THE ISSUE: Too few daycare spaces.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Create new spots to ease the burden on families, while opening up employment opportunities to qualified immigrants.

It's not uncommon for mothers in Victoria, BC to be told they will be on a daycare waiting list for years, or for fathers to take three buses to the only child-care centres accepting infants, or for grandparents to travel from the mainland because their grandkids have no one to look after them.



Creation of new child-care spaces was the aim of an innovative program undertaken by the Victoria Foundation.

The Victoria Foundation's 2009 Vital Signs report highlighted the problem: the Capital Region has just over 5,200 registered child-care spaces for the more than 18,000 children aged 5 and under. It was the lowest-rated indicator in Vital Signs.

So the Victoria Foundation launched Every Child Counts, an innovative program that aims to create 50 new child-care spaces by 2011 through a recruitment program focused on small, home-based child-care settings provided by immigrant stay-at-home parents.

The collaborating agency, the Victoria Single Parent Resource Centre and its Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) Program, received a \$20,000 grant.

"This proactive grant is an important step toward ensuring that all families have access to quality, affordable care," says Belinda Moxey, the CCRR's Program Co-ordinator.

"It's a significant issue that impacts entire families. We wanted to address it in a very concrete manner with quick, yet lasting, results."

– Sandra Richardson, CEO, Victoria Foundation

Learn more: <http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca>

WORK

Bringing bright biz ideas to life

Toronto Community Foundation

THE ISSUE: High unemployment figures among young people.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Help young Torontonians take their bright business ideas to the next level.

One of the most startling findings in Toronto's 2009 Vital Signs report showed more than 20 per cent of the city's youth were unemployed – an increase of five per cent in just one year.



The Toronto Community Foundation is playing a key role in programs aimed at encouraging youth entrepreneurship. Mayor David Miller is among supporters.

The Toronto Community Foundation responded quickly with its new Youth Micro-Loan Initiative, co-funded with the City of Toronto, Alterna Savings, Toronto Community Housing, Social Enterprise Centre of Excellence and UrbanArts Community Arts Council.

"Supporting youth entrepreneurship is one way the Toronto Community Foundation is working to balance the scale," says Rahul K. Bhardwaj, President and CEO. The initiative is an intensive social enterprise/business training program that enables marginalized youth to transform a business idea into a realistic business plan. The 16-week pilot, with about a dozen participants aged 18 to 24, is under way in the city's west end. The young entrepreneurs will pitch their completed plans – ranging from car-washing to catering to fashion consulting – to a panel, for up to \$5,000 in seed money. Two Toronto Community Foundation fundholders, both with entrepreneurial backgrounds, invested a total of \$20,000 in the project.

"This program has planted a seed for us to look at new ways to address this Vital Signs issue."

– Rahul K. Bhardwaj, President & CEO, Toronto Community Foundation

Learn more: <http://www.tcf.ca>

BELONGING AND LEADERSHIP

Quick action for Haitian immigrants

Foundation of Greater Montreal

THE ISSUE: Haitian immigrants flood into Montreal in the wake of the catastrophic earthquake in their home country last January.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Help the newcomers heal and settle into their new surroundings.

The earthquake in Haiti made headlines around the world. And its reverberations are still being felt in Montreal.



Maison d'Haiti was among the beneficiaries of efforts by the Foundation of Greater Montreal.

The city has received more than 3,600 families fleeing the devastation. As many as 10,000 more people have applications working their way through the system and are expected to arrive in 2011.

It was clear they would need help on many fronts, so the Foundation of Greater Montreal mobilized immediately, issuing a special call for proposals so it could allocate a portion of its grants to local Haitian relief projects.

One recipient is the Maison d'Haiti, which has a 38-year history of delivering social services – from education and parenting support to employment counselling and youth programs – to the Haitian community.

The non-profit received \$10,000 to expand its art therapy program and other workshops to respond to an increasing number of people suffering from grief and upheaval, as well as post-traumatic shock.

"In a time of need, we came to the aid of this organization to give them the resources in response to the needs of new immigrants and their integration."

– Marina Boulos, President & CEO, Foundation of Greater Montreal

Learn more: www.fgmtl.org

Vital Signs Giving Guide

GETTING STARTED

Employing immigrants to the fullest

THE ISSUE: Newcomers are experiencing unacceptably high levels of unemployment.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Two community foundations pioneer innovative methods of integrating immigrants into the workforce in their chosen field.

The Calgary Foundation, Vancouver Foundation

In 2009, the unemployment rate for "new" immigrants (those who've lived in Canada for five years or less) was almost twice that of their Canadian-born counterparts.

It's an alarming situation, especially since this country will soon be relying on immigration for our labour force growth. But an organization in Alberta is bridging the employment gap for many newcomers and the local community foundation was one of its earliest supporters.

The Immigrant Access Fund Society of Alberta partnered with The Calgary Foundation to launch a program offering micro-loans to immigrants. The loans can be used for Canadian accreditation, training, exam fees – whatever they need to become gainfully employed in their pre-immigration career field. The average loan is \$4,800 and a whopping 70 per cent of loan recipients are now happily employed.

Meanwhile, Vancouver Foundation has recently helped (through a \$50,000 grant) launch the Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia to assist small- and medium-sized employers concerned about credentials, language skills and cultural differences among prospective immigrant employees.

"We've all heard the story about the taxi driver who has a PhD in Engineering yet can't get a job in his field," notes Catherine Clement, Vancouver Foundation's Vice-President, Communications.



Programs supported by foundations in Calgary and Vancouver provide funds to help bridge the employment gap for newcomers.

YOUTH

Growing the next generation of leaders

THE ISSUE: Engaging youth in local issues and organizations.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Give young people a voice on local issues, guidance to address those issues, and valuable work and life experience.

Hamilton Community Foundation

Since the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) of Hamilton Community Foundation was founded 10 years ago, one of its main focal points has been the environment.

Along with many hands-on activities – from staging neighbourhood clean-ups to conducting an annual conference to awarding more than \$27,000 in grants last year – the group is also growing the next generation of community leaders.

The group's 20 members, all high-school students, meet twice monthly. They learn about granting, about the community, about funders and about fund development.

"We're positioning kids so that they can really play the role they want to play. This gives them the platform, and the opportunity," says Sheree Meredith, HCF's Vice-President of Philanthropic Services.

The YAC was recently awarded the Dr. Victor Ceciliani Environmentalist of the Year Award of Merit for its 10 years of valued work, including a hugely successful annual Living the Environment conference.



Hamilton Community Foundation is fostering the next generation of community leaders with its Youth Advisory Council.

"Joining YAC has been a truly enriching experience that has helped me develop myself, as well as giving me a venue to help actively enact change in Hamilton."

– Allan Enriquez Sotelo, co-chair, Hamilton Community Foundation YAC

Learn more: <http://www.hcf.on.ca>

ARTS AND CULTURE

Celebrating the arts in port city

THE ISSUE: Long seen as an economic and industrial hub, Saint John is rarely recognized for its vibrant arts and culture scene.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Put the New Brunswick city on the map with a musical, cultural and historical extravaganza.

Greater Saint John Community Foundation

According to Greater Saint John's Vital Signs, the port city played host to more than 3,500 arts and cultural events/activities in 2008. But citizens – from within and otherwise – don't seem to celebrate that largesse.

However, that may change with Marco Polo: The Musical, an extravaganza that will soon launch with help from a \$30,000 Anniversary Grant from the Greater Saint John Community Foundation.

Named for the Venetian explorer, the Marco Polo was a three-masted wooden clipper ship, launched at Saint John in 1851. She was known as the fastest ship in the world and her design ushered in the Golden Age of Sail.

Marco Polo: The Musical will feature nearly 200 actors, musicians and singers and be one of the largest theatre events ever staged in the province.

The money goes to the New Brunswick Youth Orchestra, the Saint John High School Concert Choir and the Saint John Theatre Company. The show makes its debut Oct. 23.



A \$30,000 Anniversary Grant from the Greater Saint John Community Foundation is helping launch Marco Polo: The Musical.

"It seemed like the stars aligned, because we were able to help a unique production at the same time Saint John was being named a 2010 Cultural Capital of Canada."

– Jane Barry, Executive Director, Greater Saint John Community Foundation

Learn more: <http://www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca>

ENVIRONMENT

Clearing the air in London

THE ISSUE: Air-quality readings show London's levels of particulate matter – a key component in smog – are third-highest among Vital Signs participants.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Assist citizens and organizations with innovative projects that will have a tangible impact.

London Community Foundation

London's Clean Air Challenge wants projects that will address air-quality issues in the community – and it's putting \$100,000 in seed money where its mouth is.

Forty-nine proponents submitted a basic summary of their ideas before 13 chosen applicants moved forward with a more developed proposal. Now, eight finalists will make their case for a portion of the grant money to the selection panel (think CBC's The Dragon's Den, only greener and kinder) on Nov. 24.

Supporters of the Walking School Bus Project are delighted to be progressing to the next phase of the challenge.

"Vehicle trips directly related to school are a large portion of all trips generated in Canada," says Gail McMathon, Executive Director of London Black Parent, which spearheaded the application.

Other finalists include a bike co-op, an eco-local campaign and a solar thermal education program.



Seed money from Clean Air Challenge helps generate fresh ideas.

"We're asking, is it going to improve air quality in our community? But also, is it something our community needs – is it unique to our community?"

– Cindy Graeme, Program Co-ordinator, London Community Foundation

Learn more: www.lcf.on.ca

www.vitalsignscanada.ca



Charitable or passionate?

For many, a charitable donation is simply not enough to satisfy their personal desire to contribute to important causes. If you are passionate about making a lasting difference, the various programs within BMO Financial Group can assist you.

Being the only financial institution to partner with Community Foundations of Canada, BMO Financial Group offers you access to more than 40 participating community foundations through its Supporting Your Community Program, the BMO Nesbitt Burns® Charitable Giving Program, and BMO Harris Private Banking's Philanthropic Services.

Our experts will make it easy for you to contribute to causes that are meaningful to you and your family. To learn more on the many ways you can make a difference, visit bmo.com/giving or call 1-866-310-6228.



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COMMUNITY MEANS SO MANY THINGS TO SO MANY PEOPLE, AND THE WORLD TO US.
IN ALL WE DO AND ALL WE SAY, WE'RE ALL FOR COMMUNITY.

Inspired by the community foundations participating in Vital Signs 2010.

Learn more at www.cfc-fcc.ca or www.vitalsignscanada.ca.