



Looking Forward

The Canada We Believe In

Seven Goals for the next Seven Years

Canada has a lot going for it. As the *Vital Signs* demonstrate, the stability, safety, abundance and prosperity of our communities are truly remarkable. That's why, throughout Canada's history, people from all parts of the world have willingly faced adversity and uncertainty to settle here. Each new arrival only adds more courage and 'can-do' attitude to our country.

This pioneering spirit, which has already enabled Canada to accomplish so much, fuels our collective belief in our ability to keep getting better and stronger as a nation. Building on such strong foundations, Canadians have the opportunity to tackle the problems we haven't yet solved, confident in the knowledge that we have the intellectual, social and financial resources needed to overcome just about any obstacle...if we try.

Community foundations share that spirit. While the job of ensuring Canada keeps getting better and stronger is never finished, each effort toward that goal moves us all forward. Community foundations believe that every person has a job to do in ensuring that we all enjoy the quality of life Canada is capable of achieving and we want everyone to have the chance to do their part. We're working to make sure that:

- Young people are fully engaged in community life, through voluntary work, civic participation, philanthropy or a personal passion that contributes to our shared quality of life;
- Residents, community groups, funders, government and others are collaborating on shared solutions to environmental issues across Canada;
- Foundations of all kinds, and the donors they work with, are digging deeper to identify and tackle the roots of pressing problems in our communities like poverty;
- Diversity is celebrated and reflected in every aspect of our society, from boardrooms to classrooms and beyond;
- Communities that are often excluded or marginalized, such as newcomers and Aboriginal peoples, experience new hope, opportunity and respect in our society, so that we can build a shared future together;
- Our communities are vital places that are set to meet their most important needs, challenges and opportunities, today and in the future;
- More Canadians identify ways they can make a personal contribution to the vitality of their communities and their country.

Most importantly, we hope that we will take risks together to try to build better communities. We might make mistakes, but we will learn from one another. And find some answers.

This is a section of *Canada's Vital Signs 2008*

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Vital Signs, like the markers along a trail, help us check if we're headed in the right direction. Following each publication, community foundations use *Vital Signs* findings to raise key issues with citizens and community leaders in their own communities. They will drill deeper into the findings, promote discussion and brainstorming and encourage personal and community action to bring about positive change. In a year's time, community foundations will take stock of the data again, reflect on their strategy and progress, renew dialogue and keep on moving forward.