



Community Foundation to Host “Funders’ Forum” Greater Saint John’s Vital Signs Report 2009 to be previewed

SAINT JOHN, NB (June. 8, 2009) – The Greater Saint John Community Foundation is inviting Greater Saint John area foundations, funders and fundraisers/donors to a preview of their upcoming Vital Signs Report 2009 on Greater Saint John’s quality of life and to discuss how it helps identify community priorities they may fund. It will help provide background and guidance on ten quality of life areas to better focus on local needs. The June 12 “Funders’ Forum” gathering will include local funders who donate to both broadly based and targeted community causes.

“At a time when charitable groups are urgently in need of support and the economic climate is creating hardship and restraint on endowment earnings, it’s timely to come together and discuss areas of mutual interest” said Cheryl Robertson, Chair of the Community Foundation. “Public-spirited groups and individuals are contributing generously to many causes in Greater Saint John. We think they would want us to direct our resources to the areas where it seems needs are greatest” she added. “We are very fortunate to have, a number of public and private foundations, registered charities, generous corporate donors and thousands of community minded donors who may find Vital Signs useful” she concluded.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation will be releasing an online survey on “Greater Saint John’s Vital Signs®” in August, with an invitation to the participants of the “Funders Forum” and the public to “grade” our community’s quality of life. They will be asked to grade selected data in 10 key areas, critical to our quality of life, for inclusion in the 2009 Report: Gap between Rich and Poor, Safety, Health, Learning, Housing, Getting Started, Arts and Culture, Environment, Work, and Belonging & Leadership. The survey will contain data highlights from the full report, due this fall. Their input will be based on a one to five “Star” grading for each data set. Last year over 300 responded to the survey and were tabulated to form the report’s grading component, a measure of local progress.

The community’s fourth annual report card will incorporate the results of the survey, along with a wealth of data, tips for how individuals can get involved to improve our grades, as well as local “good news” stories. The aim is to ensure that the October report fairly, comprehensively and accurately describes our community using the best information available from reliable sources. A new feature this year, when reviewing the report online, will be the ability to drill more deeply into the original data sources, linking directly to data and research from many national, provincial and local sources such as Statistics Canada.

Community foundations in 16 Canadian communities*, including Saint John, will release their annual Vital Signs report cards, aimed at measuring the vitality of their communities, simultaneously on Tuesday October 6, 2009 and post them at www.vitalsignscanada.ca.

The foundation funds this project as a public service to highlight issues of local importance, and as a planning tool for many sectors of the community. It works with Community Foundations of Canada and also engages the Saint John Human Development Council to assist in compiling the research on economic and social data.

Vital Signs gives each community foundation, its donors, and the community-at-large valuable insight into the community's strengths, challenges and opportunities. The reader-friendly report cards track quality of life in key areas such as: learning, health, housing, and the environment and provide a blueprint for reflection, discussion and action.

Community Foundations of Canada (CFC), the national membership association for the country's 160+ community foundations, will also issue Canada's Vital Signs 2009, a national report that tracks trends, shares success stories, and encourages deeper discussion and debate. The report will be distributed in The Globe and Mail on Wednesday, October 14. CFC helps Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work, and play.

Vital Signs is available in hard copy from 2006, '07 and '08 and on the Community Foundation website, www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca. This is the fourth year the Foundation has produced the quality of life snapshot as a public service. It undertakes costs associated with it for the improvement of the community.

"Grants of \$4.8 Million to over 270 Saint John area charities for youth, seniors, social services, health, education, heritage, the arts and the environment since 1976"

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*This year's Vital Signs participants are:

- Greater Saint John, NB
- Victoria, BC
- Central Okanagan, BC
- Sunshine Coast, BC
- Boundary Communities, BC
- Calgary, AB
- Medicine Hat, AB
- Red Deer, AB
- Kingston & Area, ON
- Ottawa, ON
- Toronto, ON
- Oakville, ON-Guelph & Wellington, ON
- Waterloo Region, ON
- Greater Sudbury, ON
- Wolfville, NS