

Community Foundation to Mark 35th Anniversary with Award

By Jane Barry,

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation is celebrating its 35th Anniversary Thursday, June 9, 11:45am at the Marco Polo Cruise Terminal, 111 Water Street. It will award a special anniversary grant of \$30,000 to the Greater Saint John Teen Pregnancy Committee. The announcement will take place in conjunction with the presentation of grants to almost sixty Saint John area charities totaling over \$260,000 representing the Foundation's annual grants. The public is invited to attend to mark the cumulative distribution of \$5.4 Million to local charitable causes since the Foundation's inception in 1976 and to celebrate the generosity of their community-minded donors.

The anniversary grant is the Foundation's way of supporting the community's interest in addressing multiple and longstanding issues relating to the high rate of teen pregnancy, the exceptionally large proportion of single parent families headed by teens and the profound negative impact on theirs and their children's long-term successes and achievements in life. The funds will be directed to an umbrella group comprised of several community not-for-profit agencies, business, related professionals and government, who have been collaborating on the issue since the mid-nineties. They plan an extensive multi-faceted public awareness campaign and represent a diverse group of concerned individuals with backgrounds including health, education and social development. Penny Higdon, a public health nurse, heads the coalition group and will receive the award. Groups like the TRC or Saint John Centre for Youth, BCAP, Family Resource Centre, Saint John Human Development Council, Vibrant Communities and interested professionals came together to review the statistics and plan a strategy last fall. They have secured the corporate support of Revolution Strategy and Hemmings House to map out a communication plan directed at those most affected, teens, their families and those in close contact with them.

The Anniversary Grant was inaugurated in 2006 to mark the Community Foundation's thirtieth anniversary. The major award of \$30,000, or \$15,000 in two segments, goes to a community charitable group which best addresses clearly documented priorities in Greater Saint John annually. The Foundation's last five annual "Report Cards" on Greater Saint John's quality of life, Vital Signs, has identified a number of community challenges such as the high rates of births to Saint John teens. It is almost double the provincial average, and has a correlation to poverty and not completing school. This has been confirmed in recent research undertaken by the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative. Vital Signs is produced as a public service and used as a grant-making guide.

"Our Community Foundation was established in 1976 to improve the quality of life for our citizens" said Dr. Stephen A. Willis, Foundation Chairman, who will make the presentation. "Groups who operate on a shoestring will very seldom refuse a grant of any size, but occasionally, a more substantial sum can truly make a difference to a charitable group or coalition of groups such as the Greater Saint John Teen Pregnancy Committee. We congratulate them for taking the lead to solve this persistent social challenge in our community. We are grateful to community-minded foundation donors, who make the dozens of grants we provide annually possible." he concluded.

Anniversary grants can positively affect the arts, social services, health, education, the environment, heritage or recreation and have been awarded to First Steps, the Salvation Army, the Saint John YM-YWCA, the Crescent Valley Resource Centre, ACAP Saint John and "Marco Polo, The Musical" to date. Public spirited donors can continue to contribute to the Community Foundation's Anniversary Fund, which is permanently endowed and continues to provide funding for Anniversary Grants each year.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation will present Franklin O. Leger, Q.C. with their 2011 Community Service Award at the Anniversary Celebration as well as recognize his significant contributions, community leadership and service for almost six decades. A new bursary fund in memory of Gregory J. Bangay and a fund for the Jewish Historical Museum, as well as an inaugural grant from the Carleton Kirk Lodge Fund will be announced.

In the mid-70's, the Saint John YMCA was the site of a gathering of 15 community and business leaders to consider establishing a community foundation. Adrian Gilbert, Q.C., Wallace D. Macaulay, Q.C., Wallace S. Turnbull, Q.C. (now Justice) and Henry Caldwell, a bank manager, took the lead. The group liked the concept of a locally governed, independent, permanent trustee of endowment funds that could generate earnings that stayed in Greater Saint John, making grants to local charities. A 1976 private members bill followed that first meeting. It was modeled on other Canadian Community Foundations and made the Saint John Foundation the Province's second community foundation.

Well known businessman, community supporter and philanthropist, Philip W. Oland, became the first Chair. Other directors included representatives of the Saint John Law Society, Wallace D. Macaulay, Q.C., and Wallace S. Turnbull, Q.C.; the Saint John Medical Society, Dr. Henry J. Flood; the Saint John Board of Trade, James M. Crosby; Walter E. Harris, the Saint John District Labour Council and John F. McCrossin, C.A. treasurer. Lino J. Celeste succeeded Mr. Oland, followed by Michael E. Doyle and Cheryl M.G. Robertson. A collage of Board Chairs since 1976 will be jointly unveiled by them on June 9.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation prides itself on the relationships it has developed with its many community partners: businesses, charitable organizations, municipalities and individuals and is grateful for the trusted community leaders who have served with dedication and generosity on the board for 35 years. Together they have taken the lead in events and projects which bring honour and improvements to Greater Saint John, nurtured the vision of building resources to make our community a better place and encouraging legacies that supporting worthy causes in Greater Saint John. Their Mission is to serve as a trustee of gifts, support charitable organizations and inspire community leadership. Their Vision is to ensure a sustainable future and improve the quality of life in Greater Saint John.



Photo: The Greater Saint John Community Foundation's \$30,000 Anniversary Grant will go to the Greater Saint John Teen Pregnancy Committee (pictured at a recent session) for a multi-faceted public awareness campaign to address the community challenge of the high rates of births to Saint John teens.



Community Profile is a weekly column highlighting community causes and work done by non-profit organizations in the Greater Saint John area. It is contributed by Jane Barry, executive director of The Greater Saint John Community Foundation. Contact the foundation at 506-672-8880, sjfoundation@nb.aibn.com To view other Community Profiles go to www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca