



**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **COMMUNITY FOUNDATION RELEASES FIFTH ANNUAL CHECKUP**

**Saint John, NB** The Greater Saint John Community Foundation is releasing, "Greater Saint John's Vital Signs® 2010" today, its fifth report on the quality of life in Greater Saint John. Along with fifteen community foundations across Canada, they measure the vitality of our cities, identify significant trends, and assign grades in areas critical to quality of life, using data compiled from many national, provincial and local sources.

"Greater Saint John's Vital Signs" displays economic, social and population data, in ten broad categories or Indicators: Housing & Transportation, Work, Belonging & Leadership, Safety, Health & Wellness, Getting Started, Environment, Learning, Arts & Culture and The Gap between Rich and Poor. The aim is to ensure that the report has fairly, comprehensively and accurately described our community using the best data available.

The foundation funds the \$15,000 project as a public service to highlight issues of local importance, and as a community planning tool for community groups, leaders, businesses and researchers. To ensure this effort is a good use of precious resources, Cheryl M.G. Robertson, Community Foundation Chair, is asking our community to "give us your comments on its merits and how it might change or be improved as we work together to make Greater Saint John a better place to call home." "The Saint John Human Development Council helps research and prepare the report" states Sara Mudge, the Chair of the Community Foundation's Vital Signs Committee. "We are pleased to have had community representatives Dr. Greg Marquis and Philip Reeves also serve on our committee," she added.

The Community Foundation conducted an August online survey on "Greater Saint John's Vital Signs®", to seek out community opinions using data highlights from the full report. 332 respondents gave their input into a "Star" grading for various data sets, included in this year's "report card".

With census data and other statistical information not produced annually, Vital Signs reports on diverse and informative data from many reliable sources. As Saint John celebrates its 225<sup>th</sup> and Rothesay its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries in 2010, it is a banner year for Arts & Culture locally. The Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) continues to face demographic challenges, particularly an aging population and a slow growth rate. Net immigration numbers added almost 400 people to the 2007 population with 2009 CMA estimates at 126,600. The local economy CMA was not immune from the overall global recession. Current labour market data points to a decline in the seasonally adjusted employment level over the previous year, although the decline is lower than provincial or national rates. Other global trends like climate change were apparent in the region. The mean temperature has increased; our winters are getting colder while our summers are getting warmer.

An examination of selected lifestyle choices and behaviours shows that obesity and smoking rates are declining slightly. In the City of Saint John the 2010 Composite Learning Index increased. A growing percentage of the population over 15 possesses post secondary credentials. A smaller proportion of the CMA's population lived in poverty (using the Low Income Measure) in 2007. Housing in the area remained relatively affordable, although housing starts showed a drop of more than 20% between 2008 and 2009. 87% of residents used a vehicle as their primary mode of transportation to work.

Community Foundations of Canada is releasing Canada's Vital Signs, a national report measuring the vitality of our communities and our country. Greater Saint John's Vital Signs report will be launched at their office, 40 King St. at 10am, October 5. All are welcome.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation serves as a trustee for charitable, educational and cultural purposes. It administers funds given by the public-spirited individuals for the benefit of the people of this area. Established in 1976, the Foundation's assets stand at approximately \$8 Million.

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***"Grants of \$5.2 Million to over 275 Saint John area charities for youth, seniors, social services, health, education, heritage, the arts and the environment since 1976"***

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Vital Signs® reports can be viewed or downloaded at:

[www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca](http://www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca) \* [www.vitalsignscanada.ca](http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca) \* [www.sjhdc.ca](http://www.sjhdc.ca)