



GREATER SAINT JOHN'S

**VitalSigns® 2010**

Our Region's Annual Check-up

## **COMMUNITY OPINIONS COUNT VIA VITAL SIGNS SURVEY**

*by Jane Barry, The Greater Saint John Community Foundation*

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation is inviting you to express your views on key elements of our community through participation in the annual Vital Signs® survey. By taking 10 minutes to rate 10 quality of life areas, via an online survey, you can make a difference in how we assess ourselves and influence leaders.

Vital Signs® is an annual community check-up conducted by sixteen Canadian community foundations that measures the vitality of our cities, identifies significant trends, and assigns grades in at least ten areas critical to quality of life, using data compiled from many national, provincial and local sources. The survey is posted on the Community Foundation's web-site, [www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca](http://www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca) or by going directly to: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/SaintJohnVitalSigns2010](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SaintJohnVitalSigns2010) Also using local municipalities' websites, and in cooperation with groups like FUSION, Enterprise Saint John's Life on Your Terms, Uptown Saint John, Facebook and Twitter, the invitation is open to all until August 15 .

Gap between Rich and Poor, Safety, Health, Learning, Housing, Getting Started, Arts and Culture, Environment, Work, and Belonging & Leadership comprise the indicators, with survey results on selected data to be included in the Greater Saint John's Vital Signs 2010 Report, due October 5. Participants can give their input based on a one to five "Star" grading for each data set on a wide range of information like: seniors' poverty rates, youth employment statistics, housing starts, post-secondary education completion rates and number of physicians per population. Hopes are high that this year's respondents will exceed the more than three hundred who took part in 2009.

The aim is to ensure that the October report has fairly, comprehensively and accurately described our community. Reliable sources, using the best statistics available, include Statistics Canada, census information, Horizon Health, Canadian Council on Learning, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Province of New Brunswick, City of Saint John, Environment Canada, Fundy Region Solid Waste Commission and Elections Canada. The CEO of Community Foundations of Canada, Monica Patten and Randall Hatfield, Executive Director of the Saint John Human Development Council, who have been engaged to do the research, both strongly support retention of the long-form census to provide data for such reports as Vital Signs.

Overall data is reflecting that the Greater Saint John area is not immune to international economic trends, as shown in a rise in unemployment numbers or the slowdown in housing starts, but effects seem muted. Encouraging data in such sectors as health, where the number of practicing physicians, per 100,000 population, has increased and teen pregnancy is marginally down, continued improvements in post-secondary educational levels, dropping poverty rates and more recycling are offset by a decrease in the value of charitable donations

and composting rates and persistently high violent crime rate. Comparisons to provincial and national data is given in most categories.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation releases Greater Saint John's Vital Signs, 2010, our community's fifth annual report card, in early October, incorporating survey results, along with a wealth of data, tips for how individuals can get involved, as well as stories on how the Foundation aims to make a difference. It funds this \$13,000 project as a public service and planning tool, highlighting issues of local importance. The Foundation's Grants Committee uses it to guide in their granting program.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation is the only participating NB Community Foundation in the national Vital Signs® program, coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada. It has been lauded as a valuable measurement tool for community groups, leaders, businesses and researchers.

Learn more about your community and be a part of this week's Vital Signs survey and final October report.

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The Greater Saint John Community Foundation is preparing a quality of life survey and report, Vital Signs 2010. Dr. Stephen Willis, Foundation Vice-Chairman, Kathryn Asher and Randy Hatfield of the Saint John Human Development Council review the online questionnaire in which community members are invited to “grade” data on Greater Saint John before August 15.



*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. To view other Community Profiles go to [www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca](http://www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca)*