

# Quality of Life CHALLENGE

## Phase Two

### STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN TO 2010



©  
**Quality of Life  
CHALLENGE**

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE's vision is for a vibrant and sustainable region where everyone lives in a safe and decent home, able to care for themselves, their families and their community.

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE is diverse community partners working together to generate long-lasting solutions that prevent and reduce poverty in BC's Capital Region.

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE:

- works collaboratively and strategically towards common, shared goals
- works respectfully with people who live on low and limited incomes through full inclusion in all phases of development and decision making;
- fully engages our communities through increasing awareness and understanding about quality of life and poverty;
- fosters corporate and personal leadership and responsibility for the care of our community, in particular for people who live in poverty;
- respects those who are already involved in reducing and preventing poverty by recognizing, linking and building on all efforts in order to increase efficiency while minimizing duplication and cost;
- tracks and celebrates all efforts and contributions that are made toward the goals.

In so doing we will achieve long-lasting outcomes.

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE is one of 15 designated *Vibrant Communities* across Canada. *Vibrant Communities* is a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships that make use of our most valuable assets – people, organizations, businesses and governments. It's a unique approach to poverty reduction that allows communities to learn from — and help — each other. *Vibrant Communities* links communities across Canada, from British Columbia to Newfoundland, in a collective effort to test the most effective ways to reduce poverty at the grassroots level. Recently *Vibrant Communities* in British Columbia (BC's Capital Region, Surrey and Abbotsford) began to explore shared community priorities and opportunities to collaborate at a provincial level.

All *Vibrant Communities* are committed to reducing poverty, not just alleviating its effects. We want fewer poor, not a higher standard of poverty. Poverty reduction activities are interventions that reduce the **number** of people in poverty and/or the **depth** of people's poverty by ensuring that they have access to political, social or economic resources that provide them with the ability to make measurable progress out of poverty. Poverty reduction is increasingly proposed as a complement - and at times even an alternative - to poverty alleviation which focuses on making the conditions of poverty less severe (e.g. food hampers, homeless shelters).

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE is established as a non-partisan mechanism to enable community collaboration toward the prevention and reduction of poverty in the Capital Region. It is intended to bring our community together around a common concern to co-create solutions to poverty in this region. By working collaboratively, it is hoped that our community can leverage system change and resources required, and align with economic development, housing and other strategies currently moving forward in our community. By transcending the barriers and silos that prevent our community from achieving progress, the Quality of Life CHALLENGE seeks to establish a strong, unified community voice that can build and advance a community agenda for change and achieve measurable outcomes in this national effort to bring an end to poverty.

## **PHASE TWO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

Quality of Life CHALLENGE partners are working together to generate long-lasting solutions that prevent and reduce poverty in BC's Capital Region by focusing on three strategic areas: increasing sustainable incomes, reducing costs of living, and creating learning opportunities.

### **1. INCREASE SUSTAINABLE INCOMES by:**

- 1.1 **ENGAGING EMPLOYERS:** Engage employers in managing thriving sustainable enterprises through inclusive employment practices.
- 1.2 **REMOVING BARRIERS:** Be a community-catalyst for effectively removing systemic barriers to employment.
- 1.3 **SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Support new alternative forms of employment and entrepreneurial behaviour that create economic opportunities for citizens who have difficulty participating in the labour market.
- 1.4 **INFLUENCING POLICY:** Explore and provide information to policy-makers about policy alternatives that could increase incomes, especially for those living on low or limited incomes

### **2. REDUCE COSTS OF LIVING through**

- 2.1 **ENGAGING COMMUNITY:** Engage citizens and neighbourhoods to support initiatives that make housing, childcare, transportation and food more affordable.
- 2.2 **INFLUENCING POLICY:** Explore and provide information to policy-makers about policy alternatives that could reduce the costs of living, especially for those on low and limited incomes.

### **3. CREATE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES about:**

- 3.1 **POVERTY:** Deepen public understanding of the local realities of living in poverty through the actions of people who live on low or limited income.
- 3.2 **HOW TO MOVE OUT OF POVERTY:** Research and develop tips and tools to enhance the knowledge of individuals and families to cope with daily challenges, advance up the ladder of opportunity and out of the cycle of poverty.
- 3.3 **HOW TO TAKE ACTION:** Disseminate information and create dialogue about the actions that citizens could take to prevent and reduce poverty.

## **PHASE TWO PARTNERS**

Quality of Life CHALLENGE Leadership Roundtable members include Chemistry Consulting Group Inc., Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, Community Action Team, Community Council (ex-officio), Disability Resource Centre, Faith in Action, Service Canada, Spectrum Job Search Centre, United Way of Greater Victoria, University of Victoria, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Victoria READ Society, and Volunteer Victoria.

## **PHASE TWO FUNDERS**

The City of Victoria, Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, the District of Saanich, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, The Stovel Family, and the United Way of Greater Victoria.

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