

the INDICATOR

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A JOINT PUBLICATION OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE CHALLENGE AND THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Quality of Life CHALLENGE LEADERSHIP PARTNERS



How can we help you?™



— Outcomes from a Bold New Way of Working —

Since the Quality of Life CHALLENGE was launched in 2003, it has had some remarkable achievements within BC's Capital Region. In fact much greater than those who initiated this adventure ever imagined.

"At least 1000 people have moved along the pathway out of poverty as a result of deep and durable changes such as increased wages, better workplace supports, new housing by-laws and funds", says Sue Stovel, Chair of Phase One of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE.

Some exciting accomplishments since 2003 around creating more sustainable incomes include:

- 559 local employers used the information from the CHALLENGE to inform their human resource decisions;
- 895 low-wage workers enjoy improved employee supports;
- 795 workers now earn \$1 to \$2.50 more per hour;
- >\$1,000,000 of new earnings have been brought into the local economy.

An increase in wages makes a significant impact. "That small amount of increase has allowed me to move into much better housing and even have some money left at the end of the month to treat myself to a video and pizza night, or to buy something special at the grocery store. It is the first time in many years that I've been able to have this small luxury."

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Music, media and the buzz of conversation filled the room in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria when 100 people came to celebrate the achievements of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE.

TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY, PLEASE EMAIL INFO@COMMUNITYCOUNCIL.CA

Outcomes From a Bold New Way of Working *cont.*

“The CHALLENGE was able to extend our network deeper into the community, and its efforts led to the groundswell of support we needed”

-Henry Kamphof,
CRD Housing Secretariat

Quality of Life CHALLENGE communications increased public awareness about housing affordability. Strengthened by the collaborative efforts of the Housing Affordability Partnership and the CRD, the resulting shift in attitudes influenced the decisions of local governments to:

- Create the Regional Housing Trust Fund. Since 2005, 10 of 13 local governments have contributed \$1,397,515. Some of this money has leveraged 14 times more from other sources;
- Approve the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy;
- Approve secondary-suite by-laws and other innovative housing affordability measures.

“One of the most enduring changes”, states Maureen Young, incoming Chair of the next phase of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE, “is how the CHALLENGE has broken down some of the silos between sectors and between people with different income levels. People and organizations have begun to work together in new ways, learning from those with different perspectives, and taking action to improve quality of life in this region.”

- 2,255 individuals were engaged in the CHALLENGE in its first phase, including at least 201 community groups, 153 private sector and 47 public sector organizations, and 879 individuals;
- \$1.8 million dollars in cash and in kind was invested in the CHALLENGE since 2003: 43% from the private sector, 31% from community organizations, 25% from governments, and 1% from individuals;
- 2,087 individuals and organizations from every part of this region received CHALLENGE decals for making changes to improve the quality of life in the region.

“People are looking at what is happening in the Capital Region,” says Sherri Torjman of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy in Ottawa. “The Quality of Life CHALLENGE is a leader amongst the 15 Vibrant Communities across Canada. The intentional sharing of leadership and responsibility across all sectors is making a difference. The Quality of Life CHALLENGE has learned about the power of including people who have first-hand experience living on low income and about communicating stories respectfully, and from the outset has been committed to change that is deep and long-lasting.”

The CHALLENGE is proud of its role, turning a spotlight on important issues like community connections, sustainable incomes and housing that is safe, decent and affordable. There is still a need for this kind of comprehensive community work. The CHALLENGE remains. Phase Two will be launched this fall.

More information:
www.qolchallenge.ca



The working principles of the CHALLENGE emerged as a high priority in planning sessions for Phase Two. See About Us on www.qolchallenge.ca

More Than a Help Wanted Sign

Help wanted. Employers throughout the Capital Region are hurting. The unemployment rate is at a record low and they cannot find workers. Yet hundreds of people are not counted in the unemployment statistics because they have barriers to employment and are assumed to be unemployable. Is there a way to support employers so they can hire and retain people who experience barriers to employment? That will be a focus of Phase Two of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE.

About 75% of the businesses in BC's Capital Region employ five or less employees. Unemployed people who wish to work may not speak English, have poor health, have low literacy, not have work or life skills, or face discrimination, poverty and homelessness. Many small business owners do not have the time to invest heavily in attracting and retaining employees who may need extra support.

Last fall, 112 interviews were conducted with employers, people with barriers to employment and people who work in service providing agencies. More than 33 distinct barriers to employment were named in these interviews; these were separated into either personal or external barriers.

Personal barriers are those that adults in Canadian society are expected to be able to manage themselves, such as money to afford a phone and the ability to maintain good health, finish school, and have ID. Missing any one of these supports can create a barrier to finding or keeping work. External barriers are those that a person cannot reasonably be expected to influence. Examples include: the rules for eligibility to training programs, access to proper safety equipment, or

discrimination based on visible differences. Any one of these factors can create barriers to finding and keeping work.

From the long list of barriers gathered from the interviews, attention is now centred on these nine: how employers advertise, immigrants moving into the workforce, flexible work schedules, hiring requirements, vulnerable people going into the workforce, workplace childcare, workplace mentorship, job accessibility for people with low literacy, and the myths and stigmas of the sex trade or being addicted.

The Labour Market Dialogues is a community-based research project designed to take the many ideas generated in dialogue with employers, community service providers, people with barriers to employment and others, and explore how best to support employers. The results will be shared with employers through ongoing updates in the "employer CHALLENGE" newsletter and at various events throughout the year.

The Labour Market Dialogues Project is funded by the Government of Canada and supported by VanCity.

More information:
www.communitycouncil.ca under Activities.

"You're always counting your change to make sure you get something you need. Now I am working and I know it's full time I don't worry about it."

-client participant on the importance of having work

"She could have managed the mountain if somebody could have got the damned foothills out of the way. It's the little things that keep coming up first that are so difficult."

-community service provider, speaking of a client with a barrier to employment



CRD Takes the Lead on Homelessness

Homelessness is present in all parts of this region. Chris Clements, Mayor of Esquimalt and Chair of the CRD Planning and Protective Services Committee and the Regional Hospital District, acknowledges that the CRD will take the leadership to mobilize the community around a concerted and collaborative plan of action to create housing and the needed supports for those who are faced with the terrible reality of being without a home.

After many years of discussion and effort, in March 2007 the Capital Regional District Board unanimously approved a Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS). One of the five priorities of the strategy is to “*expand the scope of the Victoria Homelessness Community Plan to the region as a whole.*” The CRD recently established Secretariats to address homelessness and housing affordability. A milestone has been passed, but there are many miles yet to go.

More than 1242 people throughout the region are homeless or nearly

homeless, according to the 2007 homeless needs survey. Housing comes first, but most people who are without a home also need support to help them find and keep a home and attend to their health needs. And they need reliable and realistic income assistance including help finding work.

Homelessness is high on the agenda of many major organizations in this region, including the Chamber of Commerce, Urban Development Institute, Victoria Real Estate Board, Downtown Victoria Business Association, Vancouver Island Health Authority, United Way, Community Council, faith community and Victoria Steering Committee on Homelessness. It is time for all these players, along with non-profit service providers and housing advocates to work with the CRD. Together we’ll find the way and the resources for bold actions to eliminate homelessness in our region.

More information:
-2007 Homeless Needs Survey report:
[www.communitycouncil.ca- What's New](http://www.communitycouncil.ca-What'sNew).
-Regional Housing Affordability Strategy:
[www.housingaffordability.ca- Resources](http://www.housingaffordability.ca-Resources)

Volunteer Profile



MAUREEN YOUNG

Maureen Young cares passionately about her community. As the Assistant Manager of Community Economic Development with Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, she has the opportunity to translate that passion to action. Maureen has a long history of community engagement, which reflects Coast’s commitment to corporate social responsibility. She is Chair of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE Leadership Roundtable, a Director of the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance, a member of the Housing Affordability Partnership, and she has brought her expertise to steering committees like the Vancouver Island Social Purchasing Portal and the United Way’s Community Impact Council on Housing for Homeless, Low Income & Working Poor. Maureen has deep roots in this community and she and her husband Erik have chosen Victoria as home for their young family – twins Angus and Graeme and older siblings Sofie and Adrian.

CR-FAIR - Food Matters!

British Columbia has the highest overall poverty and child poverty rates in Canada. Food banks in BC assisted 7.7% more people in March 2006 than in March 2005. During the same period, 10% more children received food from food banks¹.

“The need for access to healthy and nutritious foods, especially for families, continues to grow. Food access is a critical determinant of health,” said Shannon Turner, Acting Director of Public Health with the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Shannon was the keynote speaker in May at the regional food security forum hosted by CR-FAIR and the Healthy Communities Sub Committee of the CRD Roundtable on the Environment.

Susan Brice, chair of the CRD Roundtable on the Environment, welcomed more than 80 people from different interests and backgrounds to the working forum. By the end of the day the participants had set the direction for food security actions for the coming year:


- Strengthen Local Agriculture: Farmlands and Farming Support Urban Agriculture;
- Build Food Processing Resources and Infrastructure;

- Ensure Food Access through Building Food Resources;
- Develop Local Purchasing Policies;
- Expand Local Neighbourhood Markets;
- Support Food Agriculture and Health Education and Training;
- Develop a Regional Food Council.

Momentum is building to make food and food production more secure locally. Inspired by local leadership, innovative actions are increasing (see sidebar on this page). The City of Victoria passed an Urban Agriculture Resolution and developed a strategy to move the resolution into action. The Township of Esquimalt passed a similar resolution and offered to be a pilot site for an institutional policy to purchase local foods. The number of “Pocket Markets” featuring local produce increased from 3 to 11 across the region.

More information:
www.communitycouncil.ca under Activities

¹HungerCount 2006, Canadian Association of Food Banks



Certificate of Recognition
 For important contributions to enhance food security in the Capital Region

Emergency Food
 9/10 Club

Neighbourhood Based Food Work
 Patti Parkhouse, Vic West

Food Security Partnerships
 Mary Hayes, Tsartlip First Nation;
 Jen McMullen, LifeCycles

Urban Agriculture
 Elyse Goatcher-Bergmann,
 Esquimalt High School

Farming Community Contribution
 Robin Tunnicliffe, Saanich Organics;
 Dan Jason, Salt Spring Seeds

Education and Awareness
 Pia Carroll, Culinary Arts chef, and
 Mike Bobbitt, Environmental Science
 -Edward Milne Community School

Literary and Media
 Jack Knox

Government Initiative Health
 Dr. Richard Stanwick

Government Initiative Agriculture
 Brent Warner

Business Community Contribution
 David Mincey, Camille’s Restaurant



2007 Report on Child Care in the Capital Region

“Parents in our region have little choice when they look for care for their children. Figures from last spring suggest that there were fewer than 50 licensed spaces for children under three in the Sooke region, while more than 150 babies had been born in the past year and 3,500 new homes were due to come on the market.”

-Enid Elliot, Chair, Regional Child Care Council of Greater Victoria

“Early childhood services to families are at the brink of crisis in BC with waiting lists in every area of the province, a shortage of early childhood educators in all areas and training for Infant Toddler Educators being inconsistent at best. Recruitment, retention and remuneration of Early Childhood Educators continues to be an issue that must be addressed.”

-Toni Hoyland, President, Early Childhood Educators of BC

The Capital Region, like many others in BC, is under stress to provide adequate, affordable, quality options for child care. *Child Care Information Action Project: 2007 Report on Child Care in the Capital Region* was recently released. It underlined three significant barriers to providing care to young children: recruitment and retention of staff, availability of child care spaces, and availability of funding for child care services and programs.

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff to provide care for young children is affected by low wages, lack of qualified Early Childhood Educator trained employees, and funding instability. Child care staff shortages result in centre closures, unreliable child care provisioning, high child to adult ratios, high employee turnover, stress on families and care providers, and unstable numbers of qualified care providers graduating and entering the field each year.

As the number of women entering the workforce increases, the demand for non-parental child care options for their children also increases. The creation of child care spaces appears not to have kept up with the increases in demand. In 2005, the Capital Region was home to 17,083 children aged five and under. Current 2007

data on regulated child care spaces indicate that child care facilities in the region have a capacity of 5,377 regulated spaces at any given time - one licensed child care space for every 3.2 children aged 6 and under in the Capital Region.

In response to both consistent funding cuts to child care and the inability of centres to recruit and retain qualified staff, many centres have begun to increase their fees from \$50 to \$150 per day per space.

The shortage of affordable, accessible and quality child care spaces is having its impact on child care service providers and families in the region. There are no vacancies, long wait lists, and limited or no choices for parents. Due to the lack of options for child care, some parents quit their jobs, move out of the region and/or recruit grandparents or other family who live outside the region to provide care.

The inability to find child care is a recognized barrier to employment. It contributes to work absenteeism, and can be a reason parent-employees leave the work force or don't take jobs. Immigrant families face additional barriers in finding child care.

PLAY (Partnership in Learning and Advocacy for Young Children), through the Understanding the Early Years (UEY) project, has been developing inventories of healthy early childhood programs and services that support families, parents and children (from pre-natal to 6 years of age) in each municipality within the Capital Region.

More information:
www.playvictoria.org



A Children's Agenda for BC

BC's new Representative for Children and Youth carries a huge responsibility. Mary-Ellen Turpel-Lafond's mandate is:

- Advocacy that ensures that children have a safe place to go and that their voices are heard;
- Monitoring of all provincial children and youth programs, including children who live in the home of a relative;
- Investigation processes that are independent yet horizontally integrated with other government policies to review all fatalities and injuries in families.

With a vision for a children's agenda, Turpel-Lafond is committed to developing an integrated long-term plan that is clear, positive and non-partisan. Turpel-Lafond shared her vision when she spoke at the annual meeting of the Association of Family Serving Agencies (AFSA). The members of AFSA valued the opportunity for candid discussion with Turpel-Lafond, and look forward to meeting with her as the children's agenda moves forward.

In May 2007 the AFSA Steering Committee and Community Council Board confirmed their shared mission and clarified their long relationship by

signing a Letter of Agreement. AFSA continues to have an active and committed steering committee, host events and publish newsletters. Instead of hiring a coordinator, AFSA will contract the Community Council to provide services to support AFSA's work. Both AFSA and the Community Council will continue to recognize and promote each other and their connections. The Community Council is the legal sponsor for AFSA, which is unincorporated.

To subscribe to the AFSA News, a quarterly electronic newsletter, email info@communitycouncil.ca.

More information on AFSA: www.communitycouncil.ca under Activities.



June Preston, Theresa Aspol, David Burns and Bill McElroy formalize the relationship between AFSA and the Community Council

AFSA Steering Committee:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Victoria
Boys & Girls Club Services
Child & Family Counselling Assoc.
Citizen Advocacy
Citizens' Counselling Centre
Community Council
Queen Alexandra Fdtn. for Children
Military Family Resource Centre
Parent Support Services
Single Parent Resource Centre

Farewell...

The United Way of Greater Victoria and the Community Council staff teams at the send off for the Community Council. The two organizations shared space in the United Way building at 1144 Fort Street for 10 years. In August the Community Council is moving. See next page for details.



THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL IS MOVING

As of August 7, 2007, the Community Council will be located at:

**3948 Quadra Street
Victoria, BC V8X 1J6**

Phone (remains the same):
(250) 383-6166

Email (remains the same):
info@communitycouncil.ca

New fax:
(250) 479-9411

Please update your records. We look forward to welcoming you in our new offices.

Coming Events

September 10th, 2007
Community Council AGM

September 18th, 2007
United Way Campaign Launch

October 2, 2007
Launch of Victoria's Vital Signs

October 1-6, 2007
National Family Week
AFSA Fall Conference

October 15-19, 2007
Communities Collaborating Institute,
Tamarack - An Institute for Community
Engagement

October 15-21, 2007
Homelessness Action Week

November, 2007
Phase Two Launch, Quality of Life
CHALLENGE

**Support Your
Community Council**

Vision:

a sustainable quality of life for everyone in British Columbia's Capital Region.

Mission:

providing leadership to bring the community together.

Membership:

open to all concerned citizens, public agencies, private businesses and community organizations who share our mission and values.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Business/organizations	\$50
Individuals	\$25
Low income	\$3

Charitable tax receipts are issued for donations to the Quality of Life CHALLENGE or the Community Council.

Quality of Life CHALLENGE

Supporters:



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Supported by members, the United Way of Greater Victoria, contracted services and the municipalities of Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria.
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