



View Engage online at: <http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/newsletter/engage.htm!>

## Engage!

### **Are we the Great Generation?**

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Next week leaders from the G8 group of countries will gather in Scotland for their regularly scheduled Summit.

There will be enormous pressure on them as they review a plan by the Africa Commission to:

- Drop 100% of the debts owed to the world's richest countries by the world's poorest countries,
- Double the amount of high quality aid which is spent in those countries, and,
- Change trade laws so that those countries can build a future for themselves.

That pressure will come from activists, concert-goers, and concerned citizens attending events organized by the 70-country international campaign [The Global Call to Action Against Poverty](#).

The Canadian campaign, Make Poverty History, calls for both an end to child poverty in Canada, and international policies to alleviate poverty in developing countries. Vibrant Communities has joined the Canadian campaign and we encourage you to learn more about the effort to Make Poverty History at: <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/>



There are numerous famous faces promoting the global campaign, but perhaps the most eloquent appeal comes from Nelson Mandela.

*"Sometimes," he says, "it falls on a generation to be great. Poverty is man made and can be overcome by human beings."*

Poverty is not inevitable. If we have the will to act — we can **Make Poverty History**.

 [Visit the Make Poverty History website!](#)

#### **Related Links:**

- ["Click" to Make Poverty History!](#)
- [Live 8 Concerts](#)
- [Global Call to Action Against Poverty](#)

By: Louise Kearney

## ***What's Our Score? - Canadian Index of Wellbeing***

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Imagine that amidst the daily news report, the sports scores, the latest stock info, and GDP figures, we hear the latest [Canadian Index of Wellbeing \(CIW\)](#) report, a measure about how we are really doing as a nation.

Thanks to the work of the [Atkinson Charitable Foundation](#), that day is getting closer. Experts from across Canada are hard at work to create a new measuring tool that will link the economic reality and longer-term economic prosperity of our country with the social, health and environmental conditions that shape Canadian communities.

The CIW won't come up with the answer to everything, but the questions it asks are every bit as important as the answers it offers. It aims to assess whether Canadians are better off or worse off than they used to be—not just materially or based on how fast the economy is growing, but in terms of their overall wellbeing. By doing so, it will become Canada's core, central measure of progress, and it will relegate the Gross Domestic Product to the function for which it was originally designed and intended: measuring the overall size of the market economy.

Researchers working on the new Index are looking at seven specific areas or “domains” that affect the lives of everyone: living standards; health outcomes; education and literacy; environmental quality; community vitality; citizen engagement; time use and work-life balance.

 [on the CIW!](#)

#### **Related Links:**

- [Atkinson Charitable Foundation](#)
- [Roy Romanow on the CIW](#)

\* Excerpted from Reality Check, Vol. 5, No. 1, May 2005

By: Louise Kearney

## **Hamilton Joins Vibrant Communities**

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The City of Hamilton has one of the highest levels of poverty in urban Canada with an estimated one in five residents living in low-income households.

The success of Vibrant Communities, and the innovative work of the Trail Builders, has encouraged the [Hamilton Community Foundation \(HCF\)](#) to launch a multi-year effort to reduce poverty in Hamilton.

In partnership with the City of Hamilton Public Health and Community Services Department, a Leadership Roundtable has been established with representatives from business, labour, education and the voluntary sector.

The Hamilton collaboration has moved very quickly to secure resources and establish a broad based partnership and expect to launch their strategy in 2007.

They have quickly become committed to exploring how comprehensive and collaborative approaches to poverty reduction can make a substantive difference to the problem of poverty, and we are very happy to welcome them to Vibrant Communities!

 [City leaders tackle high poverty rate \(News Story\)](#)

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## Related Links:

- [Incomes and Poverty in Hamilton](#)
- [HCF website](#)
  - [Business community urged to join fight against poverty \(News Story\)](#)
  - [Roundtable for poverty reduction takes community approach \(Media Release\)](#)
  - [Backgrounder](#)

By: David Pell and Mark Cabaj

## Improving Settlement

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Canada has the second highest proportion of immigrant population in the world after Australia - one out of every 6 persons is an immigrant.

But once people arrive in Canada, where do they go? What barriers hinder their settlement? A new research project aims to determine how Canadian law and social policy may be impeding immigrant settlement.

The Law Commission of Canada and Community Foundations of Canada recently launched the *Community Scholar in Law Reform* Project and are requesting proposals from individuals or teams to conduct six to eight months of full-time community-based research.

Supported by the Walter and Gordon Duncan Foundation, The Community Scholar will consult broadly with immigrant and community-based organizations, government departments and agencies, and will identify relevant program and policy implications, including the need for law reform.

While a significant body of research exists on integration issues such as education, language, and foreign credentials, both organizations have identified a lack of comprehensive research regarding legal and policy barriers. For instance, the difficulties immigrants encounter due to non-standard work arrangements that don't

provide access to various employment benefits such as health insurance or worker's compensation. The Request for Proposals is available [here](#). Applications must be received by the Law Commission of Canada on, or before, July 15, 2005.

#### Related Links:

- [Community Foundations of Canada](#)
- [Law Commission of Canada](#)

By: Anne Marie McElhone with Louise Kearney

## My Big Fat [Greek] Wedding

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Truly magical movies allow you to suspend belief and immerse yourself in the story of someone else's life.



With My Big Fat Greek Wedding though, you often feel like you've lived that story. Be it a big fat Greek, Portuguese, Chinese, Indian or Irish one, weddings, by necessity it seems, bring ups and downs, joyful and not-so-joyful moments.

My family is currently preparing for my brother's wedding and so when I saw My Big Fat Greek Wedding again a few weeks ago, it resonated in a whole new way for me as I recognized some of my family and community in this very sweet story.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding is the story of Toula Portokalos, a thirty year old woman, living with her parents in Chicago and working in the family restaurant, 'Dancing Zorbas.' As is often the case with immigrant families, the Portokalos clan's life is imbued with all things 'Greek.' So antics ensue when Toula falls in love with, and decides to marry, a decidedly un-Greek man named Ian Miller. Ian's introduction to Toula's family and Greek community, and their (eventual) embracement of him, is a study in love and acceptance.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding was a surprise hit at the box offices. Though no big Hollywood names were associated with the project, audiences loved the humour and honesty of the film and the empathetic characters.

Available on DVD, My Big Fat Greek Wedding is a great film for remembering the important role our family and community play in helping to shape our identity.

**Related Links:**

- [More reviews from Tamarack](#)
- [Mom's review](#)

By: Louise Kearney