



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL CITIZENS CREATE VIBRANT COMMUNITY:

Abbotsford residents ban together to reduce poverty on October 4th

Abbotsford, BC (September 25, 2006) – Last month, a group of community members received notification from Tamarack Institute that Abbotsford has been officially recognized as a Vibrant Community, joining Surrey and Victoria in BC, and 11 others across the nation.

The first official meeting of the new Vibrant Abbotsford group took place in early September, with citizens from all walks of life and areas of interest sharing their views on why poverty upset them, and to personally commit to work together towards the reduction of poverty.

The next meeting convenes at the Clearbrook Library on October 4th, 5:30 to 7:30pm, where everyone will learn about collaborative leadership and take the first action-based steps in organizing for an effective approach towards eliminating poverty.

Says Glenn Hope of United Way of the Fraser Valley (the convening organization of the local Vibrant Community), 'Vibrant Abbotsford is aimed at eradicating poverty at all levels – not only the visible poor, but also those referred to as the 'working poor' – those who aren't as visible but undergo the inequities of poverty'.

The Abbotsford group is committed to working towards the tangible reduction of local poverty, through a process of engaged learning and information exchange. The group is looking to capture the hearts and minds of the community, in the knowledge that a group of people with shared values working towards the same goal can lead to real results, faster.

The Vibrant Communities movement is a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships that make use of valuable assets – people, organizations, businesses, and governments. Vibrant is an approach to poverty reduction that allows communities to learn from and help each other work through the complexities of social systems necessary for change.

At the core building group of Vibrant Abbotsford are: United Way of the Fraser Valley, SUCCESS, Community Futures South Fraser / Fraser Valley Centre for Social Enterprise, the Fraser Valley Housing Network, and VisionWorks Sustainability Group.

Coast Capital Savings has already funded a working group member to participate with 75 other pioneering leaders from across Canada in a highly relevant, 10 month learning institute that began with an intensive 5-day workshop on Communities Collaborating in Ontario last week.

For more information about Vibrant Abbotsford, see <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s2h.html> or contact Stacey Corriveau at stacey@centreforsocialenterprise.com 604.864.5770 ext 307. Information about the October 4th meeting is available through Stacey.

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Stacey Corriveau, the secretariat for Vibrant Abbotsford, can be reached at stacey@centreforsocialenterprise.com or 604.864.5770 ext 307.

Vibrant Abbotsford:

- Is focused on making Abbotsford a better place;
- Takes a community economic development approach;
- Values learning and collaboration;
- Eschews silo building and 'idea territorialism';
- Relies on grassroots galvanization and action; and
- Is action- and outcome-based.

Vibrant Communities concentrate on four key approaches:

- Comprehensive local initiatives aimed at poverty reduction;
- Grassroots collaboration involving all sectors of the community in these initiatives;
- Identifying community assets and putting them to good use in poverty-reduction efforts;
- A commitment to learning, change and sharing our learnings – whether they are the product of our successes or failures.

See <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2.php>



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