



Vibrant
COMMUNITIES
Saint John

MAKIN' IT WORK!

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT
RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

October, 2007

MAKIN' IT WORK!
NEIGHBOURHOOD EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT
RESEARCH INITIATIVE
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
1. Purpose of the initiative	5
2. Project objectives	5
3. Background information on the issues	6
4. Meeting the objectives	6
Advisory Committee	7
Neighbourhood Meetings	7
Different approach to reaching residents	8
Format for the Information sessions	8
Feedback from the meetings	9
5. Impact to date	9
6. Learnings	12
Licensed childcare spaces for children under two	12
After-school programming for young children	13
Time it may take to achieve a GED	13
Affordability of post-secondary education	15
Preparation for employment	16
Information on programs and services	17
Collaboration between community agencies and government departments	17
7. Conclusion	18
8. Summary of Feedback Comments	20
A. Crescent Valley Meeting, April 18 th	
B. Crescent Valley Meeting, May 17 th	
C. Old North End Meeting, May 23 rd	
9. Short Case Studies	24

MAKIN' IT WORK!
**NEIGHBOURHOOD EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT
RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vibrant Communities Saint John led a project funded by New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour that explored the value of an outreach role in low income neighbourhoods to share information on available services and supports related to education, training and employment. The results were encouraging and emphasized the value for service providers to connect with individuals in their own neighbourhoods.

Forty (40) individuals in Crescent Valley and the Old North End attended one of three information sessions held in their neighbourhood about existing education, training and employment preparation opportunities. Following the meeting, seventy-five percent (75%) of the attendees committed to or completed next steps related to their education and employment goal.

Telephone interviews revealed individual successes were varied and included completing the CAPP (Career Assisted Learning Program) at the YMCA-YWCA and then entry into full-time employment; enrolling with the Learning Exchange and the self-esteem program; exploring GED training; completing a computer course; and working with case managers and employment counselors to find employment.

Case managers, the neighbourhood groups of CVROC (Crescent Valley Renew Our Community) and ONE (Old North End) Change, schools, and others helped to promote the information sessions. The sessions were informal yet informative with small discussion groups focusing on the services provided by the Departments of Family & Community Services and Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Saint John Learning Exchange, New Brunswick Community College, Self-Esteem Program for Women and YMCA-YWCA.

In the feedback sheets from each session, many individuals reported that they were unaware of the services and appreciated the opportunity to hear from specific service providers and past or current participants. They also acknowledged the encouragement of their case managers to attend. The

meetings also inspired the production of a “user friendly” brochure describing services and supports related to education, training and employment.

Attendees reported specific barriers including:

- The lack of accessible childcare, particularly for children under two; the lack of affordable childcare with government reimbursement rates of only \$2/hour for babysitting and a shortfall between licensed childcare costs and reimbursement rates.
- The time required to achieve a GED as many are anxious to work.
- Affordability of post-secondary education;
- Limited assistance in finding employment; and
- Lack of assistance to address the barriers.

The project demonstrated the continuing need for:

- Outreach information sessions in vulnerable neighbourhoods as important connectors to increasing awareness of existing education, training and employment opportunities;
- Strengthened partnerships between government and community organizations to link residents to existing services and to help individuals address their barriers;
- Combining programs that prepare individuals for employment, including resume preparation, interview techniques, on the job training, job searching, and preparing for life style changes and pre and post employment coaching.

The project will next involve residents in Crescent Valley and the Old North End in planning future sessions and reaching other residents.

Thank you to the residents who participated in the information sessions and who so willingly shared their experiences. Thank you to the service providers who helped lead the information sessions and to the Human Development Council for assisting in the development of the brochure, **Makin’ it Work!**

Finally, thank you to members of the Advisory Committee for their commitment and guidance: Cheryl Brown, Mike Griffin, Allan Rolston, Carolyn Stephenson and Cathy Tait. Your interest and feedback is welcomed, please contact Cathy Wright at Vibrant Communities at cathywright.vibrantsj@nb.aibn.com or 693-4424.

MAKIN' IT WORK!
**NEIGHBOURHOOD EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT
RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

1. PURPOSE OF INITIATIVE

The purpose of this initiative was to determine if and how neighbourhood based information outreach can connect people living in poverty to education and employment opportunities and encourage their participation. It was an extension of Vibrant Communities Saint John's education and employment initiative in Crescent Valley (August 06 to March 07) and expanded to include the neighbourhood in the Old North End.

A single parent in Crescent Valley heard about the outreach meetings from a friend but couldn't attend. She then called her case manager and said she wanted to participate in a program. Since then she completed the CAPP program at the Y and is now working full-time with benefits and no longer needs to be on income assistance.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Document how residents of two vulnerable Saint John neighbourhoods, Crescent Valley and Old North End, respond to information workshops in their respective neighbourhoods that expose them to opportunities for continuing education, training and employment.
- Utilize the information workshops as a means to connect with residents and encourage them to pursue existing opportunities for further education, training or employment.
- Learn from the residents their education to employment goals and experiences, barriers and opportunities and to make recommendations about service improvements that could better address their education to employment barriers.
- Involve government, community service providers, and residents in a collective effort to engage people who live in poverty, at a neighbourhood level, in furthering their education/training and becoming employed.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ISSUES

In 2006, Vibrant Communities completed the report, Education to Employment: Pathways out of Poverty¹ which outlines the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals with low levels of education as they attempt to improve their education and find employment.

In the winter of 2006, through the work of Gail Taylor with Vibrant Communities and the Crescent Valley Survey Action Team, an extensive survey was conducted of all 388 households in Crescent Valley. The questions relating specifically to the areas of education, training and employment indicated that residents were concerned with the lack of information on existing opportunities and they identified specific barriers including childcare, transportation, health, and lack of job experience. A number of residents expressed interest in working in the health care, childcare and computer fields.

There is a significant focus in Saint John to work with residents in low income or vulnerable neighbourhoods, building resident-led neighbourhood engagement and partnering with others on specific actions to improve their communities. Vibrant Communities is very engaged, facilitating efforts in Crescent Valley with Crescent Valley Renew our Community (CVROC) and in the South End with SEA-CATS (South End Area Community Action Team). ONE Change (Old North End) is also very active and works closely with VCSJ. All three organizations have developed community plans to guide their efforts. A fourth group has been initiated in the lower west side. While each organization is unique, they share common goals of developing their community and improving the quality of life of residents with residents.

4. MEETING THE OBJECTIVES

Rather than presenting each objective individually the following describes the process and results in organizing information sessions in two vulnerable Saint John neighbourhoods of Crescent Valley and the Old North End.

¹ The report can be accessed through the Saint John section of Vibrant Communities Canada's website at <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s28.html#keydocs>

Advisory Committee

VCSJ formed an advisory committee of government and community agencies to guide the initiative. It met on a regular basis to provide input into the organization, promotion and evaluation of the information sessions and to make recommendations for next steps. The members are as follows:

- Cheryl Brown, Family Literacy Worker
- Mike Griffin, Employment Counsellor, Post Secondary Education Training and Labour
- Sheri McAulay, Saint John Learning Exchange
- Allan Rolston, Case Manager, Family & Community Services
- Carolyn Stephenson, Service Canada (chair and also co-chair of Education to Employment Working Group) and
- Cathy Tait, Academic Upgrading, New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) - North End Centre

As described later, a number of other agencies and organizations assisted in helping to promote the information sessions and/or participated in the information sessions to explain the opportunities that offered by their services.

Neighbourhood meetings

Individuals living in poverty are frequently isolated in their community and lack the confidence to believe that their situation can change. They may have heard about different programs and services from their case manager (if on income assistance) but lacked the courage, support and possibly the money to explore options further. As emphasized in earlier surveys, often individuals are not aware of what opportunities exist. The intent of this initiative was to **reach** residents, **connect** them to the education, training and employment opportunities, and **learn** about their barriers to participation and what helps.

In an earlier period from January to March of 2007, meetings were organized in Crescent Valley; one was hosted by the Somerset Pre-School Centre and a second by Hazen White/St Francis School. Both organizations partnered with VCSJ to distribute flyers to approximately forty parents whose children attended the pre-school program and to parents through 150 children attending school, keeping in mind that in both situations some parents were working. A third session took place at the CV Survey Centre which entailed an employment workshop offered by a case manager and employment counsellor. Flyers were also promoted through VCSJ's meetings with Crescent Valley

residents. Six people (some of whom attended the information sessions again in the spring) participated. This was a disappointing response and required another approach.

Different approach to reaching residents

During the months of April and May, two neighbourhood meetings were organized in Crescent Valley at the Somerset Police Station and two were organized through ONE Change at the North End Community Centre. Both locations were within walking distance for most residents.

Efforts were increased to reach residents and encourage participation. Two separate meetings were held with approximately 14 case managers and a supervisor with Family and Community Services to share information on the initiative and ask for their assistance in encouraging the participation of individuals from their caseload who lived in each area.

The case managers were integral to the success of the neighbourhood outreach approach. They agreed to contact individuals from their caseload – some wrote letters, some called and others did both to encourage participation. A number of case managers attended the sessions to lend their support to those attending from their caseload. It was not always easy to convince individuals to come; some case managers hoped that more would have attended.

"It was very helpful to receive a call from my case manager".
Participant at Information Session

ONE Change sponsored and assisted with promoting meetings in the Old North End. Other forms of promotion included the distribution of flyers (designed to be inviting) door to door through members of CVROC and ONE Change; placing flyers in stores and promotion through the Community Adult Learning Program at the North End Community Centre (which is located in same location as the meeting).

Format for the Information Sessions

Meetings were designed to be two hours in length and in the morning from 9:30 to 11:30. There was one evening meeting which was an experiment but met with limited success. Participants broke into small groups and rotated to hear five different service providers, some of whom included past or current program participants who could speak directly to the experience and impact.

Residents spent 15 minutes listening and asking questions related to:

1. Services of Family and Community Services
2. Services of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
3. Self-Esteem Program for Women
4. Programs of the YMCA-YWCA
5. The Learning Exchange and North End Centre of NBCC

"Very resourceful speakers and having people that already are experiencing or finished each thing was helpful. Glad I came!"

Participant at Information Session

A feedback sheet was distributed to each person with the option of completing and also asked for permission to do a followup call.

Feedback from the meetings

Participants were very pleased with the resourceful speakers and found the information very useful. Many expressed a gratitude for people's time to share the information and were very "glad they came". The format was active, friendly and informal. Participants were very positive about the encouragement from case managers to attend and the presence of past or current program participants sharing their experiences.

5. IMPACT TO DATE

Thirty-nine individuals participated in this initiative. Twenty-three residents from Crescent Valley: twenty participated in the two meetings held in the spring; one individual heard about the meeting from a friend and followed up with her case manager and two residents from the winter sessions were participating in specific programs – computer training and work ability. Sixteen residents participated from the Old North End.

After the meetings, many individuals worked with their case manager on next steps. Efforts were made to track the impact for each individual, through contact with their case manager and/or individual followup calls by Vibrant Communities, if contact information was available. When followup calls were made, individuals were encouraged to contact their case managers to discuss specific options if they hadn't already done so. A number of residents were appreciative of the

"I found out that my worker can help me in different way than just money".

Participant at Information Session

followup call and in some cases the additional information that was provided. They also welcomed further followup calls.

The results were encouraging. Approximately 75% or 29 individuals who attended the information sessions were connected to a specific service – some completed a next step such as the self-esteem course, the computer course at the Y, a work ability program or the CAPP (Career Assisted Planning Program) program at the Y. As indicated earlier one individual completed the CAPP program and is now working full-time. Others are currently involved in programs such as the Best (Basis Education Skills Training) program of the Learning Exchange or have been referred to start a program in the fall including the CAPP program, the Self-Esteem program, Career Counselling, and testing for the nine week GED at the North End Centre.

"I thought this was great for people who didn't know where to go for information".

Participant at
Information Session

The chart on the following page illustrates the interest of residents in the different opportunities.

IMPACT TO DATE

The following chart presents information gathered concerning the 39 residents from Crescent Valley and Old North End who attended the meetings or were involved in other ways. The chart shows 33 individuals who are involved or considering specific next steps (four individuals have been counted twice, so actually 29 individuals).

Self Esteem	Learning Exchange	North End	Computer at Y	CAPP at Y	Employ Counsel	Other (Planning) FCS	Work Ability FCS	Interested in NBCC/Other
1 completed 4 are interested in fall course	1 came only for the assessment interview 1 attending Best program	7 are interested to take 9 week GED (testing in August) 1 interested in upgrading science	1 completed & working at cleaning) 2 interested	1 has completed 2 are interested in next session	1 being laid off met with Employ C. 1 from FCS asked to be referred 1 interested	2 referred to career couns 1 attended info session for Partners Building Futures	1 has completed 1 is interested	2 want to but could not afford 1 plans for fall 1 is interested
5	2	8	3	3	3	3	2	4

6. LEARNINGS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

There are many learnings through this initiative. We learned about the resiliency of individuals living in poverty coping with many challenges yet maintaining the hope that opportunities related to education, training and employment can lead to changes in their lives. It takes time and reinforcement for individuals to decide to make changes.

The followup contact identified different barriers facing individuals and short case studies illustrate the possible impact of these challenges:

- Licensed childcare spaces for children under two
- After-school programming for young children
- Time it may take to achieve a GED
- Affordability of post-secondary education
- Preparation for employment
- Information on programs and services

Licensed childcare spaces for children under two

Saint John has a troubling lack of licensed childcare spaces for children under two; as of June 2006, there were 39 licensed childcare spaces for children under fifteen months in Saint John.

Debra: Debra will do the testing for **GED** in August to see if she will qualify for the 9-week GED program at the North End Centre. In Ontario she went part way through grade 12. She just had a new baby (her other child is in school) but her family is not available to help with **childcare and there are limited opportunities** for licensed childcare facilities for children under two. Ideally she would like to wait till her child is one year old to place her in a licensed childcare facility (if there are openings). She has a computer at home but does not feel the GED online course would work for her. After her GED, she is interested in part-time employment, possibly in the childcare field.

Laura: Laura is a single parent with two children. She would like to get her **GED** at the North End Centre but is having **trouble finding childcare** for her 11 month old son. After the information meeting she placed her child's name on a waiting list for a licensed childcare facility. She is thinking that in a year's time when her father retires he could look after her son. She also heard that you can prepare for the GED at home without a computer and is exploring this further.

After-school programming for young children

Janice: Janice has three children, one of whom is six years old and has speech and other learning disabilities. She is interested in the **self-esteem course but not sure about after-school childcare**, i.e. who would pick up her child at 2:00 pm and look after her. She spoke with her case manager and is currently on a waiting list to see the Career Counsellor for assistance to find out what kind of job would best suit her.

Time it may take to achieve a GED

Seven individuals were interested in the nine-week GED program (which is for individuals working at a higher academic level) at the North End Centre of NBCC so they can apply for work. Experiences show that many individuals assess their academic level much higher than it actually is and in addition a high percentage writes their GED tests more than once. The experience at the North End Centre is that approximately 66% of individuals who do the pre-test qualify for the 9 week GED; however many find it difficult to successfully complete the program. Furthermore instructors are concerned about individuals with GED being prepared to take post-secondary training as many are not operating at a high enough level to cope with the rigours of post-secondary.

Individuals wanting a short training course to connect them to the workforce, but who are not eligible for the nine-week GED can access the following options:

- Pathways to Success at the Learning Exchange, which includes essential skills, pre-employment training and on the job training;
- BEST program, also at the Learning Exchange which includes GED, life skills and job preparation
- Skills Links program which provide skills and job preparation and placement for youth 18 to 30 and offered through the YMCA-YWCA (CAPP program) and the John Howard Society (although they now require someone to have GED or working towards it).

The following page provides a snapshot of the number of seats and people participating in educational and transition to work opportunities.

Educational and transition to work opportunities in Saint John:

Profile of Educational and Transition to Work Opportunities in 09/07			
Educational Programs & # of seats	Description of Program	Location	Impact on individuals
185 CALP seats - free	Assists individuals in improving their reading, writing and numeracy skills and at times to achieving their GED	<u>Uptown/south</u> - Coverdale Centre - Learning Exchange - John Howard Society - St. John Baptist School - Youth Choices <u>East:</u> YMCA-YWCA <u>West:</u> Carleton Community Centre <u>North:</u> North End Community Centre	326 (of which 111 from Learning Exchange and average length of stay was 4 months) (222 in total in 05/06)
Adult High School Diploma – <i>info still to be identified on # of seats</i>	Academic upgrading \$135/course. F/t means 3 courses a semester. May take 3 or 4 semester	North End Centre	<i>info still to be identified on # of individuals</i>
25 seats for 9 week GED course, NBCC - \$240	GED preparation course. Offered 4 x/year. <u>9 wks</u>	North End Centre	221 in 05/06 (<i>info still to be identified on 06/07</i>)
30 seats for GED Prep 1 - free	Orientation to GED & evaluation/assessment. Offered twice a year. <u>9 hrs</u>	NBCC	46 (9 hours)
18 seats for GED Prep 2: Math - \$89.40	Offered twice a year. <u>35 hrs</u> GED Prep a prerequisite	NBCC	29
18 seats for GED Prep 2: Writing/Reading - \$89.40	Offered twice a year. <u>35 hrs</u> GED Prep a prerequisite	Only offered in Sussex for 07/08	30
GED Orientation On-line - \$18	To evaluate/test one's skills for writing GED		15
GED Prep On-line - \$89.40	Learning modules with writing and math, 4 months		14
Total			Still to total
Employment related programs & # of seats	Description	Location	Impact on individuals
24 seats for Skills Links	For youth 18 -30. Skills enhancement and job preparation and on-the-job training. Offered 3 to 4 times/year	- John Howard Society - YMCA-YWCA	30 – JHS 30 - Y
24 BEST seats (reduced to 12 in 07/08)	GED, life skills and job preparation	Learning Exchange	50
10 seats for Pathways to Success [new]	Essential skills, employment training and on-the-job training (GED is optional)	Learning Exchange	8 (1/2 year only)
Total:			118 individuals

38% (165 out of 427) of individuals who wrote their GED in 06/07 were successful.

Previously, records show that 50% of all individuals, from both community college and community programs, who wrote their GED over the last four years in Saint John, were successful.

Chelsea: Chelsea has two young children in daycare. She is experiencing problems with them and was being referred to Early Intervention. She does not have much family support. She was attending a community adult learning program at Coverdale for a number of months to work on her GED and although she felt she learned a lot, she recently stopped because she wanted a more structured program. She was interested in going to the North End Centre for the nine-week **GED** course. She also would like assistance in doing her **resume**.

Melinda: Melinda wants to work at Eddie Bauer but needs her GED. She would like to take the **9 week GED** if she can qualify for this and will take the test in mid-August at the North End Centre.

Affordability of post-secondary education

As described in earlier reports, financing post-secondary education is particularly challenging for a single parent on income assistance as compared to a single parent who qualifies for assistance from Training and Skills Development of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour through their EI eligibility.

To illustrate the contrast: A single parent on EI or reachback who was previously working for \$10 hour full time receives an amount in EI benefits similar to a single parent on income assistance. The following itemizes the difference in basic costs between the single parents (with one child) participating in post-secondary education – childcare, transportation and tuition:

Basic Costs Associated with one year of Post-Secondary Education	Costs for single parent who receives income assistance from FCS	Costs for single parent who receives TSD support
Childcare	\$6,150	Covered under TSD
Transportation	600	Covered under TSD
Tuition	\$2,600	\$1,300 (50% is covered)
Total	\$9,350	\$1,300
Note: <i>Income Support received to cover shelter, food, clothing and other cost of living expenses</i>	<i>Single parent on income assistance receives \$9,144 annually. Also includes basic health coverage (prescriptions, optical, dental for child, although not dental for parent).</i>	<i>EI recipient who worked f/t at \$10/ hour receives \$10,560 annually. Recipient has option to pay \$1,368 for basic Blue Cross coverage (does not include dental).</i>

Christina: Christina has three children – 19 year-old who is schizophrenia (information was provided on the Open Door Club), 17 year-old son who is deaf and mentally delayed (currently at St. John Baptist and will start at Simonds in the fall), and an eight year-old son. Her main concern is going to work. She wanted to take the Human Service Counsellor course as she “signs” and has a real interest in looking after children or seniors, but feels she **cannot afford to go to school**. She is interested in a **workshop on employment** so she can find out what she is best suited for. She has been referred to the **Self-esteem course**.

Sarah: Sarah has her GED and approached her case manager about taking a home care course. After talking with her case manager, she decided that she **did not want to take out a student loan** and so will try to find work.

Preparation for employment

A number of individuals wanted assistance with developing their resume and finding work. We learned that the Association for Community Living has an “employment plus” program which individuals with barriers to employment can access for assistance in finding work; though only if referred by their case manager (FCS) or employment counsellor (DPTL). The Association expressed an interest in being involved in the neighbourhood outreach initiative, as they would welcome more referrals.

There is little opportunity for individuals to come together to learn about employment preparation and to support each other. This prompted the Advisory Committee to explore the feasibility of offering a short employment related workshop and to ask individuals in the followup calls what they would be interested in learning. The following suggestion came from participants:

- Learning tips and tools to finding work
- Developing a resume
- Identifying the kind of work one is suited for
- Preparing for the interview process
- Finding work in a specific field
- Learning about other courses that will make them more employable
- Finding part-time work

Information on programs and services

Both service providers and individuals living in poverty benefitted from information on available services. A number of comments from the feedback sheets indicated an appreciation for the time service providers took to share information at the meetings, but also the lack of awareness of what exists in the community. The Committee suggested an information pamphlet on the education, training and employment services, and a draft was distributed at the meetings.

The Human Development Council through its community information database worked with Vibrant Communities to develop an inviting brochure entitled “**Makin It Work!**”. A small amount of money from Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour supported the development of the brochure. It can be accessed through the Human Development Council at www.humandevdevelopmentcouncil.nb.ca.

Collaboration between community agencies and government

The Neighbourhood Education to Employment Research Initiative benefited from the participation of many partners - members of the Advisory Committee, case managers with Family and Community Services, community agencies, neighbourhood groups, schools, and government departments. There was a strong commitment to reach out to individuals and one that was clearly welcomed and recognized by participants in the information sessions.

The involvement of case managers was integral to the outreach role. Attendees readily acknowledged how helpful it was to receive the encouragement from their case manager to attend the meetings.

The partners, who presented at the meetings, felt the time commitment was reasonable and were willing to be involved in future meetings. They recognized the advantage of small groups where people can feel comfortable asking questions though suggested in the future that the number of small groups could be based on number of participants. Other suggestions included strengthening the promotion of the information sessions, such as through a story in the newspaper. Some agencies agreed to call past participants in their programs to encourage their participation in future information sessions.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the neighbourhood initiative were encouraging with participation from forty individuals living in poverty. Twenty-nine individuals committed to next steps in programs associated with education, training and employment; some of whom started and even completed programs during the project.

Neighbourhood Outreach

The research initiative demonstrated the value of neighbourhood based information outreach as a forum for connecting individuals living in poverty to education and training opportunities. A number of factors contributed to the success of this initiative:

- The community agencies and government departments were coordinated in their effort to reach out and connect individuals to services.
- Many residents in vulnerable neighbourhoods were frequently unaware of the array of services and supports that could be available to them.
- Case managers were instrumental in encouraging and supporting individuals on their caseload to attend.
- Different avenues for promotion helped to reach and encourage residents from vulnerable neighbourhoods to participate.
- The informal yet informative nature of the meetings was well received. An informal conversation with a neighbourhood leader reported that “she heard good things about the meetings”.

Bringing the Community Together

A number of challenges, from finding childcare to accessing short-term training to preparing for employment were barriers to individuals’ next steps in moving to economic self-sufficiency. Experiences of programs in Canada and United States place a high value on the glue to an individual’s progress being followup services through a consistent person working with individuals to address their barriers and provide encouragement. The resource limitations in our community emphasize the necessity of strengthening partnerships between government and community services to link individuals to existing services and to help them address their barriers.

Links to Employment

Individuals with low levels of education and work experience face many barriers in finding and maintaining employment including having the confidence and tools to find work. This could be addressed by improving the coordination between the current resources that provide employment related

services. Combining programs that prepare individuals for employment, including resume preparation, interview techniques, on the job training, job searching, and preparing for life style changes and pre and post employment coaching would more adequately prepare individuals for the world of work. Providing “group” guidance, bringing individuals together to assist them in their job search process, and help them develop their own support networks would also be helpful.

A second barrier is the expectation from employers that a GED is always required. It is important to help employers to identify the skills they require, whether a GED is needed and if not what will meet their labour force requirements.

8. Makin' it Work! Neighbourhood Meetings: Summary of Feedback Comments

A. Crescent Valley Meeting, April 18th *(feedback sheet changed after this meeting)*

Number of Participants: 10: Crescent Valley residents as participants

1. Yes, I would like more information

- On Home Care training programs
- I think I got all I can get
- I would like more training in work
- Career consultation and resumes
- Yes

2. Yes, I would like to volunteer to help improve access to education, training and employment opportunities

- Yes (x2)
- Possibly

3. Comments

- Please call me for next meeting (x6)
- It was very helpful to others and me and I will be using these programs and I will let other people know about what's going on in our community
- Very resourceful speakers and having people that already are experiencing or finished each thing was helpful. Glad I came!
- Very informative

Feedback from everyone at the end of the meeting

- Residents found the session to be great - very helpful
- It was helpful to receive flyer but it was the followup call from case managers that gave the extra encouragement and made the difference
- Helpful to have people who have been through the programs or are current participants
- Try to address the sound issue in the room as at times it was hard to hear
- One suggestion for reaching others would be through the school
- Time of 9:30 to 11:30 is great
- Do the one pager on services into some kind of pamphlet which would be more attractive and distribute
- Encourage people to bring someone with them
- Could volunteers play a role?

B. Crescent Valley Meeting, May 17th: Summary of Feedback Forms

In total, 10 people were in attendance, two of who just came in for specific information (GED and computer training) and then left

1. How was this meeting helpful in thinking about next steps in going to work or attending an education or training program?

- Very helpful. I am planning to get to know how to work with computers.
- I am already attending CAPP program
- I found out where to go and who to talk to in order to get testing for math placement test
- Yes, for people that don't know what is out there. It also helps show that the path you have chosen is the right one.
- It has shown me how to set up my priorities in life
- Very well done
- Computer programming at the Y
- Information on how to get into the GED course
- It enlightened me to the opportunities that are available out there, including single parent camp offered by the YMCA/YWCA
- Good, because I cannot keep living like this. Low self-esteem. I have to like me before I can do anything else.
- Learning about the CAP program at the Y.
- This is going to help with job placement

2. What other kinds of information or programs would be helpful?

- Instead of using flyers that are delivered to the door, put them in envelopes with each person's name on it so they are not thrown away.
- More detailed outline of each program with contact name and description of each program written out
- Youth activities ranging from 12 to 18. Karate, etc. Also volunteer services Education for people with low IQ and have problems with learning math, english and other subjects.

3. Would you like to help us reach other residents so they know more about what programs and services are available?

Yes (x 4)

4. Any other comments

- Other than to say that it was wonderful for everyone who took time to come to this meeting to help us to decide on our future.
- There needs to be more talk about safety for neighbourhood and kids

C. Old North End Meeting, May 23rd: Feedback Form

Participation: 15 people attended during day on 23rd and one attended on May 24th (evening session)

1. How was this meeting helpful?

- Learned a lot about different skills at the YMCA and HRD
- Found out what I need to know
- Glad I am, I'm interested in a few things that might help me.
- (x3) Found it very helpful, thanks
- Learned a lot of information that I can pass on
- Talked to the lady about self-esteem and will followup. Also met someone who can help me with job interviews and if I have any questions about jobs I can call him. Found out my worker can help me in different ways than just money.
- Very helpful in getting out there and finding different ways to find jobs
- Helpful to find out information about work – especially new trades and jobs coming to Saint John
- Learned about different money issues and access to loans through EI that I would not have known
- Helped me find someone to help with my resume

2. What other kinds of information or programs would be helpful?

- (x2) Finding out about the YMCA CAPP program was helpful
- Not sure
- anything that would be helpful
- free courses for people who are not working that may benefit them – computers, GED

3. Would you like to help us reach other residents so they know about this program?

- (x4) Yes
- Yes, but with a young family and going to school and work my time is limited.
- (x3) This would be beneficial to others

4. Any other comments

- Thought this was great for people who did not know where to go for information
- It was very helpful
- Lot of information in the small groups
- Thank you. Would like my mother to be contacted

- Great idea for residents who are looking for work or thinking about upgrading their education
- People were very polite, kind and very helpful. They had a lot of answers and asked a lot of questions that I thought were very helpful. Can not volunteer due to my two young children and studies but I give a big congratulations to the very many wonderful people that give their time to do so.

Service Providers and program participants

- helpful to find out about other programs as it is important to network with others
- good idea to meet people in the community, what about an information session on the west side
- learned a lot of good information. Information on housing and colleges would be helpful
- was not aware of how many services uptown and so will inform my GED students how to find employment and other available services

9. Short Case Studies of Individuals Who Attended Neighbourhood Information Sessions

Note: The following provides short snapshots of some of the participants from the Neighbourhood Information Sessions to illustrate their goals, barriers and possible next steps. It was not possible to contact everyone who attended, sometimes because of discontinued phone numbers or inability to reach; while the majority of individuals were on income assistance, there were a few who were not.

Case managers were helpful in also providing followup information as most individuals followed up with their case manager after attending the information sessions.

Crescent Valley

Tina: Tina has talked to her case manager about attending the **CAPP** program in the fall at the Y. She is interested in helping to promote.

Barbara: Barbara is definitely interested in a **computer course** and will check with her case manager. She is interested in working with seniors but does not have her GED (tried in the 80's) and will check with her niece (works at Comcare) to see if she will need her **GED**. She is interested in a **workshop** on finding work – particularly tips and tools in finding work. She is interested in helping to promote.

Barbara: Barbara has her GED and would like to find part-time work. She asked her case manager to refer her to an **employment counsellor** to assist with developing her resume and finding work. She was pleased to find out about a self-esteem course for her teenage daughter at the Community Health Centre.

Chelsea: Chelsea has two young children in daycare and is experiencing problems with them and was going to be referred to Early Intervention. She does not have a lot of family support. She was attending Coverdale for a number of months to work on her GED and although she felt she learned a lot, she recently stopped because she wanted a more structured program. She asked to have her number given to the North End for testing for the nine-week **GED** course. She would like assistance in doing her **resume**.

Christina: Christina has three children – 19 year old who is schizophrenia (and I provided her with information from Danny Jardine), 17 year old son who is deaf and mentally delayed (currently at St. John Baptist and will start at Simonds in fall), and 8 year old son. Her main concern is going to work. She did want to take the Human Service Counsellor as she “signs” and has a real interest in looking after children or seniors, but feels she **cannot afford to go to school**. She found out about a camp for her son at the Y and will follow up. She is interested in a **workshop on employment** so she can find out what she is best suited for. She has been referred to the **Self-esteem course**.

Debra: Debra will do the testing for **GED** in August and see if she can qualify for the 9-week GED program. In Ontario she went as far as part way through grade 12. She just had a new baby (her other child is in school) but her family is not available to help with **childcare and there are limited opportunities** for children under two. Ideally she would like to wait till her child is one year old and place her child in licensed childcare (if openings). She has a computer at home but does not feel the GED online course would work for her. After her GED, she is interested in part-time employment, possibly in the childcare field.

Genevieve: 58 year old woman who has different health issues such as arthritis which prevent her from working. She had been working for 8 years in the health care field until her health stopped her at age of 47. She is interested in working with Crescent Valley residents (**CVROC**) with the Resource Centre. She has Gail’s number.

Janice: Janice has three children, one of whom is six years old and has speech and other learning disabilities. She is interested in the **self-esteem course but not sure about after-school childcare**, i.e. who would pick up her child and look after her. She spoke with her case manager and is currently on a waiting list to see the Career Counsellor for assistance to find out what kind of job would be best for her. She is interested in an employment **workshop** if it could help with this.

Juanita: Juanita heard about the **self-esteem course** and has now finished the program. She has a young child at the Somerset Pre-School program. She completed a year long home care course that was offered at NBCC through NB Works but would rather work in a seniors’ home cleaning or in the kitchen. She is interested in updating her resume and spoke about following up to Mike Griffin. She is also interested in an employment **workshop** and in **computer training**.

Katherine: Katherine heard about the information session from one of her friends who attended. She then contacted her case manager and asked to be referred to the **CAPP program** which she participated in this spring.

Kathy: Kathy found the meeting was helpful to figure out how to get testing to see where she fits with her math. She is interested in trades and doesn't have her science. After talking with her case manager, Graham Ferguson, she planned to attend the **Partners Building Futures** info session. This did not work out, but she is on a waiting list for **Self Esteem**.

Melinda: Melinda wants to work at Eddie Bauer but needs her GED. She would like to take the **9 week GED** if she can qualify for this. We found out that the testing for next intake of GED is August 15 (info from Cathy Tait)

Nicole: Nicole was involved in a community adult learning program (when it was at Prince Charles) but did not stay with it long as she felt the other students were disruptive and this was not good, being in a school environment. She spoke about going to the Learning Exchange but seems reluctant to follow through. She works occasionally at cleaning jobs.

Sarah: Sarah has her GED and decided to talk with her case manager about taking a home care course. After talking with her case manager, she decided that she **did not want to take out a student loan** and so will try to find work.

Sidney: Sidney is interested in **computer** training course at the Y. He works part-time and is not on income assistance so he was hoping that the course would be free.

Name unknown: A young woman attended who was about to be laid off from a Call Centre job. She met with **employment counsellor**, Mike Griffin and was referred to another counsellor who had the capacity to work in Spanish.

Old North End

John

John wants to do his **GED** and thinks he could do it in **nine weeks**. He wants to do it so he can get a job better than cleaning. He has the information he needs and is working with his case manager, Paul Ross. He would be willing to receive a followup call again in the future. He is willing to come to a meeting to help encourage more people to come.

Laura: Laura is a single parent with two children. She would like to get her **GED** at the North End Centre (NBCC) but is having **trouble finding daycare** for her 11 month old son. After the information meeting she put her child's name on a waiting list. She is thinking that in a year's time her father will retire and that he could look after her son. She also heard that you can do your GED at home without a computer and she will look into this. She is interested in helping us identify ways to reach more people.

Lawrence and Heidi: Lawrence and Heidi attended, along with their young child. Lawrence talked with their case manager and is interested in going to the **CAPP program** at the Y. Heidi wants to upgrade her science so she can go to Vet School.

Nan: At the information session Nan found out that there was a **CPR and First Aid training** for "older people" and so she immediately followed up with her case manager and is signed up to for the two day course through St. John Ambulance in August (July was filled). Her case manager is arranging for her to do a **work ability placement** with seniors; she has worked with seniors in the past, having taken a home care course. She is a single parent with two sons and finds that minimum wage jobs are not feasible for her.

Paul: Paul was interested in attending the Learning Exchange and went for an assessment following the information meeting. However he did not show up for class and his number is disconnected.

Rita: Rita lives by herself, currently on disability and looking for work where she is not on her feet all day. She has good work experience most recently was supervisor at Robin's Donuts. She attended the community adult learning program at the Y, where in March she was successful in getting all her GED subjects, **except Math** (and this was the second time writing math). She is interested in the **self-esteem program** in the fall and would like to get her math subject as well.