

List of Accomplishments - Excerpts from Annual Reflection Report (December 2005)

Social change doesn't come easily. It takes critical thinking and planning, dedicated action and a mobilized community. Thanks to our partners and community contributors, the Saint John community has much to celebrate this year.

Involving People Living in Poverty

- An exciting mentoring process has been developed that will actively involve people living in poverty in VCSJ work and, at the same time, provide new opportunities.
- The voices of people living in poverty are being heard on radio and television and in newspapers, in forums and board rooms and are being documented in reports and on film.

Planning for Children

- The Saint John Early Childhood Development Coalition has secured a major Federal government grant to measure every child's readiness to learn and to mobilize community improvements.
- As a result of an exploratory meeting with provincial senior policy staff, the development of a model Parent and Early Childhood Learning and Care Centre in an inner city neighbourhood is receiving favourable consideration by the Province of NB.

Affordable Housing

- 101 units of affordable housing have been announced for Saint John. Neighbourhood Involvement
- 2 inner city neighbourhoods have organized for revitalization and new resources have emerged from governments, businesses and community organizations to help with initial plans and activities.
- Fuel poverty is being grappled with by energy corporations and government agencies while an impoverished neighbourhood has begun a weatherization campaign in its numerous old and drafty apartments

Children in School

- Two large businesses, JD Irving and Irving Oil, have adopted two inner city schools, providing in-school mentors, additional volunteers, and financial resources (PALS program). The matching of a third business with a third inner city school is in the planning stages.

- The principals of the inner city schools have formed an action committee, inspired by the Edmonton Inner City School model presented at a Vibrant Communities tele-learning forum.

Working with Youth

- The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC) has realized its target, close to \$2 million dollars pledged for a facility, thanks to the tri-partnership agreement of the Saint John Rotary Club, the Province of N.B and the Government of Canada.
- Two new bursaries were established to help youth in poverty afford post-secondary education. The Margaret-Ann Blaney bursary was launched by First Steps Housing and the ONE Change (Old North End) bursary was launched by Aliant and UNBSJ.
- A well-known local family established a new fund to help teens and young adults who live in poverty to move forward in their life. (???) They publicly challenged others in the community to contribute in a similar fashion.

Parents in School

- First Steps Housing has partnered with BCAPI to pilot an in-house alternative classroom for pregnant and parenting teens who have not completed high school. School District 8 and the N.B. Dept. of Training and Employment Development are working with the team to help resource the classroom.

Moving into Work

- Fusion, a dynamic local organization of young adults helping to lead change in SJ, has piloted a mentoring program for teens to help them pursue their dreams beyond high school.
- The Saint John Board of Trade is leading the development of "Dress for Success", a best practice mentoring program that equips women who have limited resources with the tools they need for employment.

Raising the Profile

- The report, Poverty and Plenty, A Statistical Snapshot of Quality of Life in Saint John, is stimulating discussion in the community.
- VCSJ was granted intervenor status with the NB Public Utilities Board and was supported in its arguments for consideration of the impact of proposed NB Power rate increases on households who live in poverty.
- The Vibrant Communities Saint John poverty reduction strategy is gaining momentum and strength and invitations to other leadership tables.

