

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES SAINT JOHN

Engaging Community Leadership

June Albert, New Brunswick Dept. of Family and Community Services

Brenda Allan, Enterprise Saint John

Jim Baird, City of Saint John

Ann Barrett, Community

LRT Donna Beaton, New Brunswick

Dept. of Family and Community Services

Peggy Bonnell, Community

Bob Boyce, Architect

Dawn Marie Buck, St. Joseph's

Community Health Centre

Lucy Burke, National Crime Prevention Centre

Lee Chalmers, University of New

Brunswick – Saint John

LRT The Honourable Erminie Cohen,

VCSJ Patron

Don Connolly, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Brian Cullinan, Prudential Summit Real Estate

Association

LRT Keith De'Bell, University of New

Brunswick – Saint John

Mary Doiron, Community

Bruce Drost, JD Irving Ltd.

Wayne Dryer, Germain Street Baptist Church

LRT Brian Dunstan, Deloitte

Debbie Eden, Health Net/Teen Resource

Centre

LRT Gary Foster, Academy of Hair Design

LRT Bill Gale, Business Community

Anti-Poverty Initiative

Scott Giffin, Medical Officer of Health, Dept.

of Health and Wellness

LRT Tom Gribbons, RBC Dominion

Securities

Kathryn Hamer, University of New Brunswick

– Saint John

LRT Randy Hatfield, Human Development

Council

Kit Hickey, Housing Alternatives

LRT Trevor Holder, Member of the

Legislature, Saint John Portland

Janet Holt, Saint John Police Force

LRT Gregor Hope, Business Community

Anti-Poverty Initiative,

Danny Jardine, Community Access Centre, St.

Joseph's Community Health Centre

Muriel Jarvis, Family Life Plus Solutions

Ross Jefferson, Waterfront Development

Partnership

Barbara Kierstead Shanks, New Brunswick

Dept. of Training and Employment

Development

Carl Killen, St. Malachy's High School

LRT Lyn King, Community

Marcia Kirkwood, Centenary Queen Square

Day Care

LRT Dale Knox, Tabufile, Enterprise

Saint John

John Lawson, Lawson Property Management

Franklin Leger, Patterson and Palmer

Yves Leger, City of Saint John

Ross MacKenzie, John Howard Society

Anne Marie Maloney, New Brunswick Dept.

of Family and Community Services

Barbara McAllister, RBC Dominion

Securities

LRT Mayor Norm McFarlane, City of Saint

John

LRT Barb McGill, Atlantic Health Sciences

Corporation

Pat McGill, Atlantic Health Sciences

Corporation

LRT Anne Marie McGrath, Community

Bonnie McGraw, St. Joseph's Community

Health Centre

LRT Councillor Peter McGuire, City of Saint

John

Susie McKeon, Inner Growth Strategies

Robert McKinnon, University of New

Brunswick – Saint John

Mike McMenamon, New Brunswick

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LRT Brenda Murphy, Urban Core Support

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Linda Perrin, School District 8

LRT Terri-Ann Richards, Community

LRT Narinder Singh, Saint John Non-Profit

Housing

LRT Donnie Snook, South End Inner City

Youth Ministry

Carolyn Stephenson, Service Canada

LRT Bob Stranach, National Crime Prevention

Centre

Gary Sullivan, O.N.E. Change

Bill Thomas, St. Andrew and St. David United

Church

Don Uhryniw, Centenary Queen Square

United Church

Shilow Van Wart, Clientlogic

Ron Vincent, St. David's United Church

Sherry Vitale, Community

Ray Walsh, City of Saint John

Wayne Wolfe, Irving Forest Services

LRT Jim Woods, Service Canada

LRT Pat Woods, City of Saint John

LRT Brenda Wright, Saint John Learning

Exchange

LRT Paul Zed, Member of Parliament, Saint

John

*LRT – Member of Vibrant Communities

Leadership Roundtable

Recognizing the Community Sponsors

-Aliant

-Bank of Nova Scotia

-Bretech Engineering Ltd

-Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative

-Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

-City of Saint John

-Computers for Schools, Dept. of Education and Aliant Pioneers

-Eastern Office Shop Ltd

-Fundy Computer Services Ltd

-Greater Saint John Community Foundation

-Huestis Commercial Insurance Ltd

-Irving Forest Services Ltd

-Lawson and Creamer

-March of Dimes

-J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

-National Crime Prevention Centre, Public

Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

-New Brunswick Dept. of Family and

Community Services

-New Brunswick Dept. of Training and

Employment Services

-Public Health Agency of Canada

-RBC Dominion Securities Ltd

-Service Canada

-Staples Business Depot

-Tabufile Atlantic Limited

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For more on Vibrant Communities

Canada visit: www.vibrantcommunities.ca

10/05



Vibrant COMMUNITIES Saint John

CONNECTIONS CREATE VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Saint John is a caring community that demonstrates great commitment from individuals, community agencies, churches, businesses, and government to improve the quality of life for all citizens. But we have a level of poverty that is unacceptable in our city. For example, over 60% of single parents live in poverty; this figure has changed little in over 20 years. What has been missing is a poverty reduction strategy led by the community that builds on strengths, while identifying and championing changes.

Vibrant Communities Saint John (VCSJ), officially launched in 2005, is a unique opportunity to strengthen the capacity of our community to help individuals move out of poverty. VCSJ brings together the skills, knowledge, resources, and efforts of business, government, community organizations and people living in poverty. We can better understand our challenges, try new approaches, and make quality of life improvements that “level the playing field”, increasing the assets of all citizens.



“We have an unacceptable level of poverty in our community. Our City will not truly grow until it offers opportunities to the 1 in 4 individuals living in poverty.”

*Tom Gribbons,
Chair, Vibrant Communities Saint John*

PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY

The goal is to help 2000 individuals or 800 households move forward in their journey out of poverty through a three-year strategy to define the poverty traps and champion key policy and program improvements. The long-term results will benefit our citizens and make Saint John an even more attractive location for economic, health and social investment.

The strategy is based on existing research and an extensive consultation process involving business, government, community organizations, faith communities, labour, and people who are living the experience of poverty. Six key elements constitute the strategy:

1. **Engage community leadership** in a network committed to achieve our poverty reduction goal.
2. **Help people move forward in their journey out of poverty** through advocacy and different forms of mentoring.
3. **Strengthen the collective capacity of the community** to invest in children and youth, ensure access to education leading to sustainable employment, and promote safe and affordable housing and neighborhoods.
4. **Measure our impact** by evaluating what works and documenting the key learnings.
5. **Communicate our community's learnings and progress** both internally to our network and externally to the community.
6. **Champion continuous engagement, learning and improvement** in poverty reduction efforts in our community.



Click here to visit the Tamarack website for more engaging content! www.tamarackcommunity.ca

ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Vibrant Communities Saint John was first developed three years ago by local community leaders, the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI), the City of Saint John, the Urban Core Support Network and the Human Development Council. Contributions from many sponsors matched the financial support from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation to make this opportunity a reality for Saint John.

We are grateful to our major sponsors - the National Crime Prevention Centre, the Province of New Brunswick and to Tabufile Atlantic Ltd for the generous donation of office facilities.

Vibrant Communities Saint John is guided by the leadership of our community through the Leadership Roundtable, working groups, committees, community partnerships, and staff.

Over 80 individuals participate in this structure along with many others who contribute their experience, ideas and hopes for the future. Whether in working groups, focus groups and interviews, or informal conversations, those who live in poverty are an integral component of Vibrant Communities Saint John.

As advocacy and mentoring programs are successfully piloted in high poverty neighborhoods, we envision a variety of avenues opening up to facilitate the continuous participation of low income citizens in all focus areas.

PAN-CANADIAN

Vibrant Communities Saint John is part of Vibrant Communities Canada, a national network of 16 communities working to reduce poverty by creating partnerships that make use of our most valuable assets – people, organizations, businesses and government. This initiative is supported through the leadership and resources of the Tamarack Institute, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the Caledon Institute for Social Policy.

The mission of Vibrant Communities Canada is to create a movement of diverse leaders and communities committed to exploring ways to substantially reduce poverty and promote an equitable quality of life for all citizens.

Saint John is proud to be a part of Vibrant Communities Canada and to exchange learnings with other partners from across the country. Ongoing telelearning forums provide an exciting avenue for sharing information and solving problems. We encourage anyone interested in participating in these forums to contact us.

POVERTY AND PLENTY

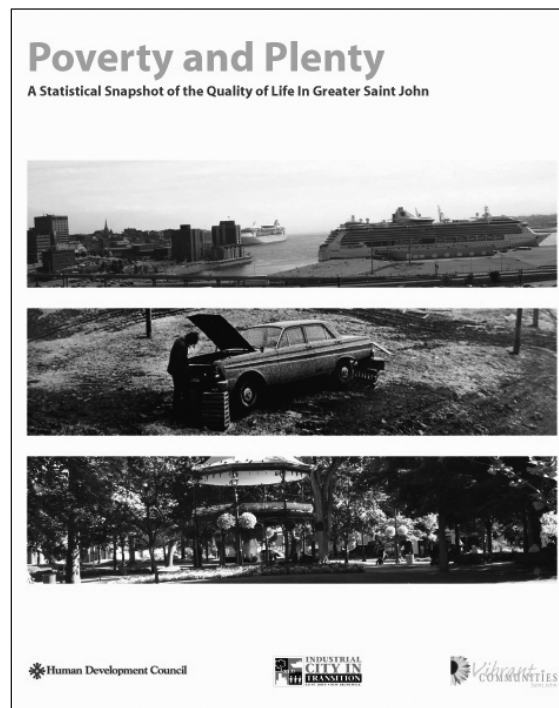
Vibrant Communities Saint John has partnered with the Human Development Council and the University of New Brunswick's CURA project to provide a detailed statistical snapshot of poverty in Greater Saint John. The report, *Poverty and Plenty: A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Greater Saint John*, uses census data, employment figures and a host of other information to provide a broad demographic and economic picture of our community.

Poverty and Plenty helps us understand our community's strengths and challenges. As new census data and other information comes out, *Poverty and Plenty* will be updated; this process will help provide the critical context to champion changes that will reduce poverty and increase equality for vulnerable Saint Johners.

The report can be accessed at www.humandevlopmentcouncil.nb.ca

Over the years, more and more of Greater Saint John's poorest citizens have been living in the city centre, while an ever-increasing proportion of the region's middle income citizens have been found in the suburbs.
Poverty and Plenty: A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Greater Saint John

In very high poverty neighborhoods where over 40% of the residents live in poverty, one in three households is headed by a single parent.
Poverty and Plenty: A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Greater Saint John



DEFINING POVERTY

Poverty is a complex issue - much broader than not having enough money to cover the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter. It also means not having the social, human, physical, personal, as well as financial assets to access opportunities to participate fully in one's community.

INVESTING IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Promoting greater investments in: early childhood development, inner city schools, after-school recreational opportunities, inclusive policies and practices for all children and youth, and caring adult mentors.



While poverty affects people from all age groups and household types, research undertaken in 2000 by Deloitte for BICAPI demonstrated that single parents and their children were most at risk for poverty to pass from one generation to another. In order to break the cycle, VCSJ has targeted initiatives that support children, youth, and parenting teens.

An inventory of services is underway to identify common themes, challenges and opportunities. VCSJ has helped to animate new opportunities that will impact on children and youth: Understanding the Early Years will measure every child's readiness for kindergarten, and a Task Force on Children's Health will focus on the health and well-being of children aged 5 to 12. Our community will also champion improved supports for pregnant and parenting teens, including assistance to complete high school.

More than 1 in 5 children and youth live in poverty in our community. As many as 1 in 8 live in severe poverty.
Poverty and Plenty: A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Greater Saint John

ENSURING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Improving transitional and mentoring supports and quality educational opportunities for adults to achieve a high school diploma and enhancing opportunities for continuing educational or employment that offers a living wage.

Studies, reports and experience emphasize the direct relationship between levels of education and income – a higher level of education significantly increases the chances of moving out of poverty. Research also shows that a parent's lack of education is frequently a deterrent to the success of their children in school, and may result in continuing the cycle of poverty for another generation. Most employers require a GED (general education development diploma which meets high school graduation requirements).

It is important to paint the picture of the opportunities, supports, and barriers for individuals without a high school education as they make the transition to further education and employment. We are consulting with individuals in basic education programs, or who have dropped out, or never attended, together with instructors, community agencies, case managers, employment counselors, and members of the trades and business communities. We will document what works well, what gaps exist, and what changes need to be championed.

The success of Vibrant Communities depends on our community working together and our responsiveness to what we hear and learn, particularly from individuals living in poverty.

PROMOTING SAFE And AFFORDABLE HOUSING And NEIGHBORHOODS

Rebuilding of inner city neighbourhoods to achieve a mixed income blend while offering safe and affordable housing options for low income families.

Vibrant Communities supports efforts to end the isolation of neighbourhoods with high concentrations of poverty. Building on existing momentum, we are promoting all levels of government to work together with the community to invest in the rebuilding of two neighbourhoods.

The value of a common message from the community has started to pay off in accelerating the call for more affordable and adequate housing and mixed income neighborhoods.

This has resulted in a Saint John based staff position from Canada Mortgage and Housing who ensures local housing proposals receive the full consideration of all levels of government.

The experience of a South End couple crippled by arrears in heating bills and concerns from Romero House were the catalysts for Vibrant Communities to seek intervenor status at the Public Utilities Board hearings on NB Power. Participating in the process enables us to champion energy-efficiency and financial supports for low-income households.

The age of housing stock in Saint John's poorest neighborhoods is significant because a great many of these buildings fall well below modern standards of safety and comfort.
Poverty and Plenty: A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Greater Saint John