

# SJ Poverty Reduction Update



September 2009

## GREATER SAINT JOHN'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

*NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER TO BREAK THE POVERTY CYCLE*

### Strategy Elements

#### Neighbourhood Revitalization

- \* Resident mobilization and training
- \* Housing Strategy
- \* Social, physical, and economic improvements
- \* Mixed Income Neighbourhoods

#### Single Parents

- Comprehensive programs and supports:
- \* Adequate and Affordable Housing Strategy
  - \* Childcare
  - \* School completion
  - \* Parenting
  - \* Health and Wellness

#### Children and Youth

- Level the playing field:
- \* Early Learning Centres
  - \* School Supports / Community Schools
  - \* Youth Programs / Engagement / Leadership
  - \* Coordination of Services

#### Workforce Participation

- \* Multiple Pathways and supports
- \* Remove barriers: childcare, transportation, health insurance, tuition
- \* Employer Leadership
- \* Living wage replaces minimum wage

### How we do it!



Reducing Poverty in Saint John requires a concerted community-wide effort and is greater than any one organization, sector or perspective.

This newsletter describes action and progress towards poverty reduction which involves many partners in our community working together.

# Single Parents

Raising a child is expensive and challenging at the best of times, but even more so for a single parent. All parents, but single parents in particular require comprehensive programs and supports such as child care, education, health and wellness

## Child care



**Early Learning Centre.** St John the Baptist/King Edward School is home to one of four demonstration Early Childhood Centres in New Brunswick. The Early Learning Center is a prime illustration of interagency cooperation. Child care, pre-school, parent programs and additional resources will be available this fall.

## School Completion



The **Saint John Learning Exchange** provides training and education to adult learners from improving numeracy and literacy skills to GED to Essential Skills, to homework help. Over 300 adult learners were assessed in the last year ready to participate in some form of learning.

**First Steps** has mastered the art of continuum of supports to meet the needs of young mothers including on site education and child care. Young mothers have successfully completed the high school curriculum and gone on to college and university showing that integrated services and supports work!

## Health and Wellness



**West Side Wellness Centre.** The hub of the Lower West Side (Carleton Community Center) just got even better! Services and supports to benefit those living in the Lower West Side will be co-locating this fall. Services include specimen collection, the food bank, a nurse practitioner, wound care, social development, and the Neighbourhood Assistant. The nurse practitioner has a growing caseload (currently 30 patients) and 742 people have accessed the specimen collection service.

The **Uptown Methadone Clinic** opened its doors in August and in its first four months 75 clients began Methadone treatments.

# Revitalize Neighbourhoods

Poverty is concentrated in neighbourhoods and in order to reduce poverty we are focussing on revitalizing neighbourhoods through its residents, community partners, housing, and improvements to the area



## Resident Mobilization and Training

**Neighbourhood Assistants.** Summer has been a time for transitions with Neighbourhood Assistants. Welcome to Sherry Anderson- Village Waterloo, Melissa Moore -Old North End, Laura Basque- Crescent Valley, Bobbie Craft- Lower Westside, and Penni Eisenhower who has transferred to the South End.

**Learn and Go.** Irving Oil Ltd has provided funding again in 2009 to run Learn and Go. Residents from Priority Neighbourhoods are invited to attend leadership workshops to learn how to improve their neighbourhoods, work with a mentor on a particular project, and pitch their projects to potential partners. Fern Bennett

[sj.makepovertyhistory@yahoo.com](mailto:sj.makepovertyhistory@yahoo.com) and Wendy DeMerchant (a past participant) are staffing this project.

**POWER UP.** POWER UP, a 10 week program to help women discover their next best step, learn new skills, strengthen their voice and solve problems begins class 5 this month. Graduates (40) of Power Up have gone onto to school (GED and College), work, and to become community leaders. For more information contact Brenda Murphy at 642-9033.

## Housing

Residents of Crescent Valley identified issues with housing as the most pressing area of concern earlier this year. Since that time Housing (Social Development) and residents have identified safety issues in specific units (e.g., mold, no-functioning fire alarms) and these issues are being addressed.

## Social, Physical, and Economic Improvements



**North End Works.** North End Works, a program to stimulate business in the North End based on the skills and talents of residents, had its formal launch on August 14th at Shamrock Park with over 300 people. Joyce Fowler and Janet McLaughlin have been hired to coordinate the project and a team of residents have begun collecting information on the skills that abound in the North End (Crescent Valley and the ONE). For More information contact Joyce Fowler at [jay\\_bee@rogers.com](mailto:jay_bee@rogers.com).

**Garbage and recycling in Crescent Valley.** CV Resource Center and Social Development will be piloting a recycling program in the near future as a start to address garbage issues raised by residents.

# Children and Youth

Not all young people have the same opportunities to thrive, however, many organizations are committed to supporting and strengthening children and youth with unique and innovative programs.

## Middle Years



**PALS/Community Schools.** “Related to poverty, I am most proud of the tremendous increase we had in parental involvement throughout the course of the school year. The more comfortable our families feel in our school, the more they buy into how important school/education is and therefore encourage their children to be at school every day. We have made great strides in instilling in our community, through Teen Vibe, CVRC, Vibrant Communities, and CVCTA that we all must work together to educate the children in our community. This has proven to be an incredibly successful mission and its results are demonstrated in parental involvement as well as student attendance” *Jennifer Carhart, Principal at Hazen White St Francis School*

## Youth

**Youth-at-Risk Forum and Report** BCAPI will be hosting a one day gathering on November 3rd to identify priority actions for youth at risk in Saint John. Pathways to Education and Employment will be highlighted. VCSJ, HDC, and BCAPI have collaborated to conduct research on the needs and realities of youth at risk (drop out rates, teen pregnancy etc) in preparation for this event. Results will be presented at the summit.

**Building youth leaders.** Traditional leadership opportunities are not often satisfying for youth who face many challenges. In order to foster this potential youth engagement activities are happening in Crescent Valley and the Old North End. Further, a Youth Learn and Go program will be offered in the fall to provide skills, experience, and mentorship to local youth councils. For more information call the Resource Centre for Youth at 632-5531. The Boys and Girls Club provides two leadership programs, Keystone Club for 13-17 year olds and Torch Club for 8-12 year olds. 30 young people participated in the two programs this past year.

Teens from the Teen Resource Centre are working with Fortis Properties to help Brunswick Square become a place where people of all ages feel welcome and respected. This month, teen ambassadors, Fortis staff, and shop owners are planning activities to get the school year off to a good start.



**Youth Choices** provides: Personal, educational and career coaching services for youth, consulting services for youth and their parents, intervention services, advocating services to help meet the needs of individual child or youth, referring youth to appropriate community and government agencies, job readiness training, résumé writing, transportation benefits to help fulfill action plans, academic support services, employment support services. For more information call 634-0788 (Source: HDC database)

# Workforce Participation

There are many barriers in moving from poverty to meaningful and adequately paying jobs; yet few paths. Connecting employers with individuals who are trained and ready to work calls for coordinated efforts from employers, government departments, and community groups. We are working together to make a difference!

## Multiple Pathways and Supports



New Brunswick Community College is offering free **blended learning academic upgrading** with a tutor available two evenings a week at the Community Health Centre.

**“Makin it Work”** a brochure that identifies education, training and employment services for adults is updated thanks to the Human Development Council and Vibrant Communities Saint John and is now available.

**Catch the Wave to Work:** Enterprise SJ, Urban Core Support Network and VCSJ are partnering together with community and government services and employers to offer short workshops to connect people to their own assets, community resources and interests of employers.

## Barriers to Education

Through the efforts of many in our community, the Provincial Poverty Reduction Plan has clearly heard about barriers to employment particularly the lack of affordable and flexible childcare and lack of coverage for prescription drugs and dental and vision care.

Minimum wage increased September 1<sup>st</sup> to an hourly rate of \$8.25. While this is good news, we know that an individual must make over \$11/hour to be above the poverty line.

## Employer Leadership



Shirley Mitchell, Human Resources Manager with Coast Tire and Auto Service says that **“TIES 2 Work”** gives employers pre-screened candidates for the positions they have available”. **TIES 2 Work** is a new program offered by the Saint John Learning Exchange, funded by Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour.

# LEADING POVERTY REDUCTION

## Vibrant Communities Saint John Leadership Roundtable

Fern Bennett	Make Poverty History
Monica Chapelin	Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative
Debbie Cooper	Boys and Girls Club
Don Connolly	CMHC
Ivan Court	Mayor- City of Saint John
Terri-Ann Cormier	Community Representative
Elaine Daley	Belyea Colwell and Associates
Jennifer Edison	South End Community
Elizabeth Gallant	Old North End
Nathalie Godbout	Enterprise SJ
Debbie Godlewski	Health Region- Public Health Services
Tom Gribbons (chair)	RBC Dominion Securities
Randy Hatfield	Human Development Council
Trevor Holder	Member of the Legislature
Gregor Hope	Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative
Elizabeth Jadoo	Greater Saint John Area United Way
Lyn King	Community Representative
Mark Leger	Fusion
Brian Marks	Social Development
Peter McGuire	City of Saint John, Common Council
Brenda Murphy	Urban Core Support Network
Lisa Murphy	Resident
Mike Murphy	Board of Trade
Sister Roma De Robertis	Sisters of Charity
Nancy Savoie	Resident- Crescent Valley
Donnie Snook	City Councillor/ Inner City Youth Ministry
Nicole Smith	Non-Profit Task Force (Fredericton)
Carolyn Stephenson	Service Canada
Bob Stranach	National Crime Prevention Centre
Susan Tipper	School District 8
Pat Woods	City of Saint John

For information or if you would like to include information about your efforts to reduce poverty, please contact:

Wendy MacDermott, Coordinator, Vibrant Communities Saint John, 693-0904 or [wendy.vibrantsj@nb.aibn.com](mailto:wendy.vibrantsj@nb.aibn.com)

### Neighbourhood Assistants

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Old North End - Melissa Moore 635-2035 [OldNorthEndNA@gmail.com](mailto:OldNorthEndNA@gmail.com)

Crescen Valley - Laura Basque, 693-8513 [CrescentValleyAssistant@gmail.com](mailto:CrescentValleyAssistant@gmail.com)

Lower Westside, Bobbie Craft 608-5990, [LWSassistant@gmail.com](mailto:LWSassistant@gmail.com)

South End - Penni Eisenhauer 652-9799, [SouthEndAssistant@gmail.com](mailto:SouthEndAssistant@gmail.com).