



Corporate Communications
Office of the City Manager
City Hall, 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario,
Canada L8P 4Y5
www.hamilton.ca



Media Release

For Immediate Release

Roundtable for poverty reduction takes community approach

HAMILTON, ON – May 13, 2005 – A community offensive on poverty is unfolding in Hamilton. The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, formed in February, is launching the development phase of a multi-year project aimed at reducing Hamilton's poverty rate. One in five residents live in low-income households. Spearheaded by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation, the Roundtable will bring together civic leaders from numerous boards, agencies, businesses, media, and municipal government to work with concerned residents, organizations and businesses in identifying the issues around poverty and developing solutions to overcome those issues.

"Poverty reduction in Hamilton has to become a priority. Our poverty rates are unacceptable," says Joe-Anne Priel, General Manager, Public Health and Community Services. "The strength from this collaborative approach will be drawn from the residents and leaders who are at its base. Together we can develop a made-in-Hamilton solution, to an issue that is not unique to Hamilton, but is being experienced by communities across the country."

"To bring about substantial change in reducing poverty, we need the participation of all sectors in our community," says Carolyn Milne, President and CEO, Hamilton Community Foundation. "As partners, we can weave together the skills, knowledge, and resources of low-income residents and the voluntary, business, and government sectors to achieve our goal."

"Our work will be solution and action oriented," says Mark Chamberlain, Roundtable Chair. "It's about investing in our residents and in the solutions that will build on our community's many strengths and guide us along the path to renewal and recovery. We are excited about the energy, hope and momentum already brought to the table by civic leaders."

Paul Johnson, Executive Director of Wesley Urban Ministries, has been appointed Project Director from May 2 to January 2006. "The formation of the Roundtable is one of many steps that we will take with our community partners over the coming months and years to tackle this issue," says Johnson. "Our work will complement existing initiatives, resources and talents. We are committed to learning and working together."

The Roundtable will play a critical role in generating the energy for and evolving the idea of a local poverty reduction initiative. It will also identify 'quick wins' and help to shape the community dialogues and learning events aimed at building community interest and will. Input from and discussion with the entire community will be vital. Interested individuals, businesses and organizations can contact Paul Johnson at the Hamilton Community Foundation (905-523-5600) if they want to learn more about this initiative, have ideas to share, or want to participate in the up-coming community dialogues and consultations.

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Media Contacts:

Carolyn Milne
President & CEO, Hamilton Community Foundation

905-523-5600

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager, Public Health and Community Services – City of Hamilton 905 546-2424 ext 4839