

# TACKLING POVERTY in HAMILTON *We can do it!*

## Tackling Poverty in Hamilton

### Our Starting Point: A Focus on Children and Youth

Poverty is Hamilton's most pressing problem, with one in five people living below the poverty line. As a community, we're saying this is unacceptable.

A Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction was formed in spring 2005 with the goal of creating a community plan to reduce and prevent poverty in our city. A four year plan will be completed by late spring 2006.

Research and community consultation carried out by the roundtable suggests a good first step for the community plan is to focus on preventing poverty in children and youth. Tackling the root causes of poverty will help to break the low-income cycle and make a sustainable difference.

### Why start with children and youth?

- Approximately 25,000, or one in four, young people under 18 years of age, lives in poverty in Hamilton, making them more likely than adult Hamiltonians to live in a low-income household.
- Hamilton's low-income households with children and youth have particular challenges: 42 per cent of lone-parent poor families and 38 per cent of couple-led poor families in Hamilton are surviving on less than half the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO). For a lone-parent family with one child, this is an annual income of about \$10,000, before taxes.
- The plan's emphasis on children and youth will include other groups with higher-than-average incidences of poverty: visible minorities, people with disabilities, aboriginal people and recent immigrants
- Consultation documents and research reports from the last five years, as well as the roundtable's most recent community consultation, consistently highlight the needs of children and youth.
- 'Best practices' reviews of both grassroots and policy level interventions point to the crucial role of supporting families in reducing and preventing poverty.
- Focusing on children and youth fits with Hamilton's strategic vision for a model community (Vision 2020).