

TACKLING POVERTY in HAMILTON *We can do it!*

October 10, 2006

Community Update

Community Interest Continues To Grow

At the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction's (HRPR) community engagement session last June, the vision to make Hamilton "the best place to raise a child" was launched, and the majority of the 170 participants said they wanted to help make it happen and are leading the way as you will be able to read in this update. A participant feedback report can be found at www.hamiltonpoverty.ca.

Since then, the HRPR has met with or presented to an additional 1,800 individuals and groups in Hamilton, and phones at the HRPR office haven't stopped ringing. If you want to get involved, contact the office and staff will try and connect you to community opportunities.

This issue of Community Update captures some of the progress made by HRPR since June, as well as activities and decisions made in the community at large that are aimed at tackling Hamilton's unacceptable poverty rate of 20 per cent.

The four-year community plan is on track to be completed by December 2006, but HRPR Director Liz Weaver points out that the increasing activity level already going on is as important as the plan itself.

"There's significant activity happening in the community already," Liz says. "As we continue to build on the framework of the community plan we are also learning that our community is ready to act and respond. The level of work going on throughout the city tells us that the vision is really catching on."

Progress Report

HRPR Strategic Framework for Hamilton

A strategic framework for the four-year community plan has been developed. The framework's four key points include strategies in the areas of Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child, governance and leadership, community engagement and evaluation and learning. This framework provides opportunities for all citizens to get involved. These four strategies will guide the work of the HRPR as it moves forward. The strategic framework is posted on the web site at www.hamiltonpoverty.ca.

Job Opportunity

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction is currently advertising for a part-time administrative assistant to work with roundtable members and the staff team. For more information, please go to www.hamiltonpoverty.ca.

Grant from The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

The HRPR has received a \$ 20,000 “Trail Builder” planning grant from The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Tamarack Institute’s “Vibrant Communities” program. The Tamarack Institute is a charitable organization dedicated to helping Canadian communities take ownership of local issues through community engagement. The grant will support the development of the four year community plan. In other news, the Vibrant Communities program called HRPR’s community plan proposal “outstanding” and will use it as a template for other communities.

Putting Poverty on the Table

The Roundtable and Social Housing Action Committee is organizing briefing sessions for municipal and school board candidates. The first was held October 6 and another is planned for October 13. These forums are an opportunity to share with candidates the critical issues relating to poverty, income security, and housing that face the Hamilton community, and explore possible solutions.

Good News from the Community

A key role of the HRPR is to convene and support community organizations and individuals in taking leadership roles in the fight against poverty. Following are some current activities:

- The Hamilton Training Advisory Board (HTAB) will include poverty reduction as a key focus at their Trends Opportunities and Priorities Conference this fall.
- A Steering Committee of youth organizations in Hamilton has received a \$10,000 planning grant to develop a three-year community plan which will ‘build a resilient community by including youth.’ A focus will be placed on marginalized and ethno-culturally diverse youth. Staff from the roundtable have been active in developing the proposal.
- Mohawk College has recently announced it will support the Robert Land Community Association to help make the Keith neighbourhood a better place to raise a child. The Robert Land School will be converted into a community centre and hub where Mohawk students will both learn and share their knowledge.
- The United Way of Burlington/Greater Hamilton has directed a \$700,000 surplus to three priorities in the city of Hamilton - one of them is for community activities aimed at making Hamilton the best place to raise a child.

News and Resources

Looking for more information about the *Tackling Poverty in Hamilton* initiative? Check out our web site: www.hamiltonpoverty.ca. You’ll find current news as well as background information and resources.

We welcome your questions and comments. Please contact Liz Weaver, Director, at 905-523-5600, or lizweaver@hcf.on.ca.