

the INDICATOR

June 2004



Quality of Life
CHALLENGE

A joint publication of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE and the Community Council

Quality of Life CHALLENGE LEADERSHIP PARTNERS



Vibrant
COMMUNITIES



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

SHAW



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playing what we want

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Community Council

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"My quality of life improves when I feel valued & listened to."

- a person who lives on a low income

Can there be quality of life for all?
In a civil society hope prevails as
we value and listen to each other.

Recent research findings from the
**Community Reconstruction
Project Report #3** indicate that
the climate of uncertainty is now
pervasive throughout social
service agencies in BC's Capital
Region. This leaves the entire
community on thin ice when it
comes to being able to support
and care for our vulnerable
citizens.

The research indicates that:
* individuals and families who
need community support were
cracking under the strain;
* agencies were flagging under
the pressure to find solutions and
to meet needs without sufficient
resources to do that work;
* agencies have been trying to
hold on to the stability that they
have and are working hard to
rebuild, using resources they can
still access. (see full report at
www.communitycouncil.ca)

How long can this continue before
the cracks in the system widen
and the ice gives way? What are
the long-term costs to taxpayers
when agencies continue to shift
from prevention to crisis services,
and from long-term to short-term
planning?

Leaders from community
organizations, business, and all
levels of government can
respectfully listen to the people
who are experiencing the issues
first hand. Together, we can
broaden the dialogue and listen to
those whose knowledge and
perspectives are beyond our
comfort zone. We can connect
with and support the community
agencies that provide prevention
and emergency services to
individuals and families who are
facing hard times.

Resilient and vibrant communities
are made up of people who listen
to and value each other.

Preparing an exhibit for
"A House is a Home" Display.
See page 8



TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY
PLEASE EMAIL info@communitycouncil.ca

TAKE UP THE SUSTAINABLE INCOMES CHALLENGE

By 2006, 5000 low-income, unemployed or underemployed people have sustainable incomes from paid work.

Five task forces were struck in the fall of 2003. The first numbers will be reported into the target in the fall of 2004.

In BC's Capital Region in 2001, of the more than 1 in 7 people who live below the poverty line:

- 18,580 worked in 2000
- 4,040 worked full time year round
- 2,105 worked part time year round

Transportation Task Force

Transportation connects people with their means of livelihood, goods and services, family and friends.

The Freedom Bicycle Project will be launched this summer to provide free bikes to people who need transportation while seeking employment. Many community partners are working together to get this started.

- The UVic SPOKES program donated 15 recycled bicycles.
- reCYCLISTas, a local bike shop, is distributing the bicycles.
- Spectrum Job Search will refer 10 clients to receive the bicycles.
- Four transition houses will take the additional five bicycles.
- The Bike to Work Week Society will assist with bicycle safety training for the bicycle recipients.
- The City of Victoria has given funds for the pilot project.

What can you do?

- Volunteer with SPOKES to help repair bicycles (email: spokes_5@hotmail.com)
- Donate new bicycle locks or helmets for bicycle recipients (email: info@qolchallenge.ca)

Dental Task Force

Only one in four low income Canadians have dental insurance, and less than half visit the dentist within a year.

Over 15 dentists volunteered or donated to the Cool Aid Dental Clinic last year. These and others who work to ensure access to dental care were recognized for taking up the CHALLENGE, during National Oral Health Month in April. Shaw TV produced a story about the Cool Aid Dental Clinic. The Cool Aid Dental Clinic served 934 people between January and March 2004. With more funding or community support, that number can increase.

What can you do?

- Donate to Cool Aid Dental Clinic (email: society@coolaid.org)
- Ask your dentist if she / he volunteers at the Dental Clinic
- Donate toothpaste and toothbrushes to emergency or community services

Mentorship Task Force

Many underemployed people need help to gain confidence and develop skills to move up in the workforce, but there are few services targeting people who are already working.

Mentorship is a two-way street where both participants learn and grow. The Mentorship Task Force is developing a network of mentorship resources for underemployed people, expanding existing services and helping to start new programs. Employers or retired people can get involved as mentors who enhance employability skills of people who aren't able to access funded pre-employment or employment programs.

the employer CHALLENGE

Do you ever ask yourself how you can make a difference in your employees' lives?

the employer CHALLENGE is an e-newsletter that provides employers with practical information on how to implement human resource policies that are good for employees and for the bottom line - that will also help to raise people out of poverty. The first issue was sent out in April to over 1500 employers across the region, with plans for 20 issues per year.

Congratulations to the Employer Task Force for the leadership and hard work they are giving to **the employer CHALLENGE**.

What can you do?

- Turn two part-time jobs into a full-time job
- Hire one person who has never had a full-time job
- Provide on-the-job training
- Provide benefits like a health and dental plan or child care
- Move employees quickly from starting wage

Subscribe to **the employer CHALLENGE**. To learn more email: info@qolchallenge.ca or www.qolchallenge.ca/employer_challenge.html

Work Clothing Task Force

In our community there are few free used clothing resources for men.

Sustainable Incomes CHALLENGE
Continued on page 7

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES www.vibrantcommunities.ca

Learning Together

"We've learned a tremendous amount as a network. We've learned much about the work of poverty reduction, but also how networks learn. In Trois-Rivières we continued our ongoing conversation about how best to flush out new and better ways of doing our work together." Mark Cabaj, Vibrant Communities

On May 18 and 19, 2004 representatives from 14 Vibrant Communities member communities gathered in Trois-Rivières, Quebec for planning, professional development, and networking. Participants included project sponsors and representatives of convening organizations within the Pan Canadian Learning Community from Cape Breton to Victoria. This was the third face-to-face meeting for convenors since April 2002 who ordinarily meet via teleconference on a bi-monthly basis.

The national partners of Vibrant Communities are Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement and The McConnell Family Foundation.

On June 22nd Mark Cabaj, a national leader of Vibrant Communities, will speak at the Community Leadership Roundtable of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE (see page 8).

Trail Builders - What's New?

Trail Builders are the living laboratory of Vibrant Communities, where new ideas about poverty reduction are put to the test. The framework for Vibrant Communities is built upon the knowledge that communities will have greater capacity for sustainability if there is multisectoral collaboration, a comprehensive approach, and a learning community.

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE in BC's Capital Region is the first Trailbuilder within Vibrant Communities. The second Trailbuilder is the Niagara Region in Southern Ontario.

Sustainable Incomes Tele-Learning Forums

Vibrant Communities hosts national tele-learning forums to explore key pathways on the journey toward a sustainable income: market based, income support, income from financial assets and saved income.

Want to learn more? www.vibrantcommunities.ca

OPPORTUNITIES NIAGARA

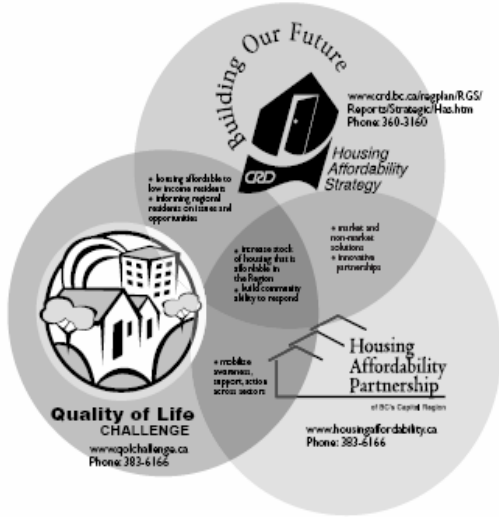
On Friday May 14, 2004, OPPORTUNITIES NIAGARA publicly launched an initiative that aims to help 2000 families and individuals out of poverty. In collaboration with area United Ways, OPPORTUNITIES NIAGARA released a significant research study on the economic performance of individuals and families in Niagara with a particular focus on poverty. The event was held in the Council Chambers at the Regional Municipality of Niagara and featured remarks by Mary Turner, Vice-President of the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families and Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism.



In recent years the region's employment base with the automotive industry has shifted to the casino industry – creating serious concerns amongst local leaders. Though the launch marks the official presentation of the initiative to the community, much has been happening in Niagara in the last two years. A community plan has been developed that focuses on issues related to the working poor, affordable housing and challenges associated with mental illnesses.

Best wishes to Niagara as they start a new phase in their community-based effort to reduce poverty!

WORKING TOGETHER ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



TAKE UP THE HOUSING CHALLENGE

By 2006, 1000 more low-income households have a safe, decent & affordable place to call home.

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE, the Housing Affordability Partnership (HAP) (www.housingaffordability.ca) and the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) work closely together. While sharing a common goal of increasing housing affordability, they approach the issue in different ways.

SOLUTION - A Regional Strategy; RESPONSIBILITY - Shared By All

Four Key Strategic Actions

1. *The Housing Fund – to provide equity to bring to the table other government programs*
2. *The Housing Facilitator and Housing Resource Center – focused on finding partnerships to develop solutions*
3. *Incentives for preserving existing rental stock*
4. *Harmonizing Local Development Regulations*

Seven Strategic Directions

Knowing that there is NO SINGLE OR SIMPLE SOLUTION, we require a collaborative, flexible and pragmatic combination of actions that build and leverage this community's resources for initiatives that respond to local needs in the short, medium and long term, throughout the region.

1. *Raising and leveraging additional funds for housing that is more affordable.*
2. *Reducing policy and regulatory obstacles to facilitate the provision of housing that is more affordable.*
3. *Encouraging intensification to improve housing affordability.*
4. *Utilizing public lands to support housing affordability.*
5. *Encouraging self-help initiatives by community organizations and individuals to increase the supply of housing that is more affordable.*
6. *Maximizing the use of existing senior government housing programs and advocating for increased funding for housing that is more affordable.*
7. *Improving awareness, changing attitudes and building support for housing that is more affordable.*

See The Housing CHALLENGE Continued on page 6.

volunteer profile

LEE KING

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Corporate Representative for Vancouver Island.

Lee's commitment to his community have compelled him to transfer his skills and knowledge to his volunteer life. The Housing Affordability Partnership has benefited from his leadership since its inception. For over 15 years he has been on the City of Victoria's Housing Advisory Committee or the Social Planning and Housing Advisory Committee – often as chair. Lee lives his values, making time for his family in the way he schedules his very busy life.

Thank you Lee for your dedication to our community! You have made a difference.

TAKE UP THE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CHALLENGE

By 2006, 1000 stories are shared of people working together to enhance our quality of life



More than 300 groups and individuals have taken up the Quality of Life CHALLENGE since January 2004. To recognize their contribution to this community they have been presented with Quality of Life CHALLENGE decals which they proudly display, like the members of Healthy Harvest Workers' Co-op in the photo. Read the stories on the website www.qolchallenge.ca.



Get your decal by reporting how you or a group you know about is working with others to enhance quality of life! Check the website: www.qolchallenge.ca, email info@communitycouncil.ca or call 383-6166.

Recognizing our Leadership Partners:

Coast Capital Savings, Government of Canada, Shaw TV, the Ocean, Times Colonist, McConnell Family Foundation, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement

SHAW staff have participated in roundtables and forums, covered stories on the Daily, provided communications expertise, pushed the depth of coverage of this work, and have been a part of decision-making. Their partnership demonstrates the most complex principle of the CHALLENGE: sharing power, information, resources and leadership.

Recognition for taking up the Housing CHALLENGE:

Victoria Community Housing Trust, Cedar Grove Apartments; Victoria Cool Aid Society, Fairway Woods; Vancouver Island Addiction Recovery Society, Foundation House; VIHA's Housing Support Workers; Society of St. Vincent de Paul; Gonzales Neighbourhood Review Committee; City of Victoria Housing Advisory Committee; the City of Colwood; the Municipality of Langford; the City of Victoria.

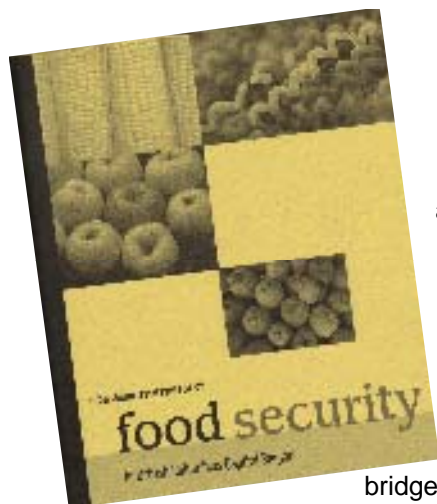
Recognition for taking up the Sustainable Incomes CHALLENGE:

Centre for Integral Economics; CineVic; Level Ground Trading; Local Exchange & Trading System; Recyclista's Bike Co-op; Shady Creek All Natural Ice Cream Co.; Small Potato Urban Delivery; The Soap Exchange; Thrifty Foods; dentists who provide dental care at no charge to people of low income.

Recognizing over 120 individuals, businesses, community organizations, and government agencies who support the CHALLENGE.

Recognition for strengthening connections among people in our community:

Art for Understanding; B.C. Assoc. of Student Activity Advisors; Brentwood Bay Revitalization Committee; Christian Actions Reflecting the Spirit; Circle K Int'l; Common Borders; Communities Solidarity Coalition; EcoNews; EcoSource Paper Inc.; First Unitarian Church of Victoria; Food Not Bombs; Gordon Head Garden Club; Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre; Greater Victoria Seniors; Groundworks; Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation; Habitat Art Project; Hillcrest School; InterCultural Association Folk Fest; It Takes a Village; James Bay Community Project, Community Closet; The Land Conservancy of BC; Lansdowne Preschool; Lifetime Networks; Meals on Wheels; Mosaic the City Initiative, a Community for Unity Project; National Student Day of Action; Open Door; Raging Grannies; Rock Solid Foundation, Trackside Art Gallery; Royal Roads Leadership Challenge; Society of St. Ann's; Student Promotion of Kickstands Etc.(SPOKES); United Way of Greater Victoria; Uvic Juggling Club; Uvic UN Club; Vancouver Island Compassion Society; Vancouver Island Vegetarian Association; Victoria Central America Support Committee; Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture; Victoria Folk Music Society; The Victoria Foundation; Volunteer Victoria; Western Canada Wilderness Committee; YM/YWCA We Are Family, Sexually Eccentric Xenophile Youth; YM/YWCA Childminding; Youth Action Effecting Change; NEED Crisis Line, Youth Supporting Youth; Wild Garden Party.



**A Baseline
Assessment of
Food Security in
British
Columbia's
Capital Region**

bridges the spectrum of food issues – from food production resources to food distribution and household food security – and provides clarity about the current strengths and weaknesses of the Capital Region's food system.

In a food secure community, the growing, processing and distribution of food is economically viable, regionally produced, socially just and environmentally friendly.

- Currently island producers grow less than 10% of our food;
- Our farmland is shrinking;
- Many people in our community are hungry and unable to meet their basic nutritional needs;

THE REAL COST OF FOOD

"Food security exists when there is universal access to food that is healthful, nutritious, safe and culturally acceptable,"

according to a new Community Council publication produced by the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR FAIR).

- Local food production means local jobs;
- Local food may cost more but it is fresher, more flavourful, and less likely to contain harmful additives.

Here are ways you can change our food system:

Support our local growers – buy local, eat local, support local farmers' markets.

Support community food programs – donate time, money or food to community kitchens, and food box programs for low-income households

Make it an issue – encourage your municipality to include food security in their agenda by protecting agricultural land and supporting local food production.

Find out more. This report is available on line under What's New at www.communitycouncil.ca

The Housing CHALLENGE

Continued from page 4

The Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS), initiated in 2002 as an implementation strategy of the Regional Growth Strategy, is being developed by the Capital Regional District in partnership with other public authorities and corporations. Since RHAS is a community-based project, a public advisory committee of stakeholder groups including the housing industry, non-profit societies and advocates, contributed to its preparation.

According to the consultant's Final Report there are four key strategic actions without whose implementation in the short term the strategy will flounder. Several of the strategies will only be effective if taken on a region-wide basis. To maintain local autonomy and to allow the unique needs and character of each municipality to be retained, the report identified municipally-mandated options that local councils could choose to adopt as their own method(s) of dealing with the issue.

See <http://www.crd.bc.ca/regplan/rgs/reports/strategic/index.htm> for all background reports, the final report, a discussion paper on housing trust funds, factsheets and background information. Factsheet #7 gives an overview of the consultants' final report.

The CRD Board referred the RHAS consultants' final report to the municipalities for their comment. As of April 28 2004, responses have been received from 9 of the 13 local governments. Many have already set policy or are considering locally-based responses. Most appear to support the strategic directions to some degree. For more information please contact Chris Goldburn, cgoldburn@crd.bc.ca, or 360-3156.

OLD AND YOUNG PLAN TOGETHER FOR TOMORROW

Common Ground Community Mapping is a way for citizens of all ages to share their values and visions and participate in the shaping and planning their community. The Community Council became the legal sponsor of Common Ground in 2000 and has helped it grow into a strong local resource for community and green planning. Over the past year Common Ground has made its mark through the:

- Development of the GroundWorks Learning Centre (with LifeCycles) which offers mapping, learning resources and services about sustainable communities;
- Greenways planning and neighbourhood development with the City of Victoria and core city neighbourhood planning, health, schools, environmental and beautification projects;
- Development of the print and web version of our Victoria and Region Community Green Map, part of the International Green Map System (www.greenmap.org);
- Participation on the International Green Map advisory and development of the North-Latin American Mapas Verdes Project to develop Spanish-English and Portuguese learning resources on community mapping;
- Academic partnerships and research related to local and global community mapping (Featured in 2003 Geomatica - profile of Cartography in Canada);
- Victoria Green City and Community Visions – a Learning Series in the Spring of 2004 in four parts: First Nations Landscape History, Green Community Economic Development and Youth Enterprise Fair, Green City Walkabout and Vision Night, Mosaic the City Workshop.



For more info or to get involved visit www.gworks.ca, phone 360-0799, or email: info@gworks.ca

In Fond Remembrance ANGUS BRAMADAT – APRIL 1933- MARCH 2004

Angus died unexpectedly yet peacefully while visiting family and friends in Trinidad. Angus' vitality, commitment and work for social justice made its mark on many people in Trinidad, and across Canada in Winnipeg, London and Victoria. He was on the Board of Directors of the Community Council, and a member of the Social Justice Committee and the Choir of the First Unitarian Church.

The Sustainable Incomes CHALLENGE

Continued from page 2

Work Clothing Task Force

The Task Force is currently working on partnering with training agencies and employment organizations to make work boots and clothing available to low income job seekers.

- The YM-YWCA has committed to helping to collect work clothes.
- Local CUPE and BCGEU members are interested in helping to collect tools and work boots to be donated to people entering the construction industry.

What can you do?

Donate your gently used clothing to local community services. Here are some places to start:

- Wear 2 Start (women's clothing only please) 472-9327
- Peninsula Community Services 656-3511
- Esquimalt Neighbourhood House 385-2635
- Single Parent Resource Centre 385-1114
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre 384-3211

What we're learning...

Individuals and working group volunteers reflected on their learnings through the Quality of Life CHALLENGE over the past months. Some samples of what people are saying:

Shared leadership and real participation of people living on low income is essential and possible.

The CHALLENGE is a motivator. There is real power in positive reinforcement.

I have more courage to dream, to think big and to know it can actually happen if you want it to

The CHALLENGE is providing concrete examples of how change can happen.

When participating I feel what I say is important and makes a difference.

COMING SOON

June 22, 2004 – Quality of Life CHALLENGE Reception, 4:30pm - 6:30pm, Congregation Emanu-el, 1461 Blanshard Street. Light refreshments and music. Transportation and Day Care subsidies available.

Community Reconstruction Report #3, impact of government changes – see the report on our website. Agencies interested in becoming part of the project, please contact the Community Council.

June 23-30, 2004 - House is a Home Art Show, Victoria City Hall Antechamber, over 20 paintings on wooden cut-out houses. . A traveling art show highlighting how having a home changed their lives for the better housing affordability. Info: Gail Price-Douglas, 361-0358.

Support Your Community Council

The purpose of the Community Council is to improve the quality of life for everyone in BC's Capital Region, particularly the people who are disadvantaged due to poverty.

The Community Council is a catalyst and leader in bringing people together to create a just and vibrant community.

Membership is open to concerned citizens, public agencies, private businesses and community organizations who share our mission and values.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Business/organizations | \$50 |
| Individuals | \$25 |
| Low income | \$3 |

Charitable tax receipts are issued.



City of Victoria
The Victoria Foundation
CRD Arts Development Office
BC Housing
VanCity
Ann Geddes
Thrifty Foods
Shine*Ola Communications
Crystal Garden Conservation Centre
Susan Stovel
Stages Dance Company
WCG International Consultants Ltd.
Access Unlimited Consulting
KPMG
BCGEU
Thomas Jones



Bringing people together to create effective community solutions

Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria

Supported by members, the United Way of Greater Victoria, contracted services and the municipalities of Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria.

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