



GRANDE PRAIRIE'S

VitalSigns®

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation Releases Grande Prairie's First Report Card

Grande Prairie – A new initiative in Grande Prairie addressing obesity in the workplace was announced this morning at the Community Foundation of Greater Grande Prairie's launch of their first *Vital Signs* report. Alberta Health Services Board Member John Lehnert was on hand at the event held at Centre 2000 to announce the program, which is still in the planning phase.

The rising rate of obesity in the region - and across the nation - was one of the key issues highlighted in *Grande Prairie's Vital Signs®*. The report combines statistics with community perceptions to provide a snapshot on the quality of life in Grande Prairie and the surrounding region.

"The impact of obesity reaches beyond our healthcare system, and impacts the community as a whole," said Tracey Vavrek, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Greater Grande Prairie. "This new community-based workplace program is exactly the kind of collaborative approach *Vital Signs* encourages to address issues impacting the well-being of our residents."

The report focused on 11 different key areas ranging from health and housing to education and the environment. It demonstrated how our region is lagging behind the province and the nation in some of our health indicators.

Statistics from 2009 show that 29.5% of our residents ages 12 and over are without a family doctor. Our physician numbers fall behind provincial and national rates.

The report shows some progress being made in the areas of education and crime. It also highlighted Grande Prairie's success as a leader in electronic waste recycling and the steady improvements in residential recycling and average water consumption.

Vavrek said the Community Foundation distributed a survey throughout the community asking people to identify Grande Prairie's top strengths and issues. A total of 489 people responded to the survey.

"Respondents told us employment opportunities are a priority, as are indoor and outdoor recreation, and we're proud of our 'sense of community,'" said Vavrek. "Healthcare and cost of living ranked highest in our areas of concern."

Vavrek said that measuring the community's vitality in critical areas is an important tool to better understand the challenges and opportunities in the region.

"*Vital Signs* will not only increase the effectiveness of the Foundation's grant-making, but it will guide residents and organizations as they make decisions that will impact their community," said Vavrek.

Other report highlights include:

- While the number of people that declared tax donations in 2009 was below the provincial and national rates, the median charitable donation for Grande Prairie CA in 2009 was on par with the Alberta median and above the national median.

- Over the past decade, GP Transit use has increased over 37%. The public transportation system provided over 572,000 rides in 2010.
- The City of Grande Prairie has 72.3 km of walking and cycling trails.
- The number of trucks registered in the City well outranks the number of cars. In 2010, 22,442 pick-up trucks and 14,685 cars were registered in the City of Grande Prairie.
- The number of women and children in need of Odyssey House emergency shelter in 2010 saw a 5.3% increase over the previous year.
- Between 2008 and 2010, in-person visits to the Grande Prairie Public Library increased by 218%.

Vital Signs is a national initiative coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada with reports being released today in 22 Canadian cities coast to coast.

Grande Prairie's Vital Signs® will be distributed Wednesday through the Daily Herald Tribune. An extended online version, which includes sources and additional information, is available at www.buildingtomorrowtoday.com.

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