

## **Media Release**

### **Hamilton Community Foundation report finds both progress and persistent social danger**

*Hamilton's Vital Signs* looks at quality of life in 12 areas

HAMILTON, ON - Hamilton is making progress in several aspects of quality of life, but the benefits have not touched everyone equally, says a new report from Hamilton Community Foundation.

Hamilton's Vital Signs issued today shows encouraging economic progress in terms of lower unemployment, more small business startups, a steady housing market and a record number of building permits. At the same time, Ontario Works caseload is the highest in a decade and child poverty continues to exceed 50 percent in several neighbourhoods.

"There has been definite and sustained progress in a number of areas, but this Vital Signs report reaffirms that in many ways, Hamilton remains a city divided by economic inequality", said Terry Cooke, President & CEO. "For instance, only three of 22 neighbourhoods have shown any improvement in child poverty since 2006. High school completion has steadily increased over the past decade, but ranges widely between neighbourhoods, and our recent immigrants have a poverty rate that is higher than in any other Ontario city. "

The report from Hamilton Community Foundation offers a snapshot of the city in 12 aspects of community life, including arts, economy, education, health, safety, housing, environment, transportation, work and inclusiveness. It is part of a national program that will see 22 Vital Signs reports released in cities across Canada today.

Hamilton's Vital Signs shows progress in several areas including the environment where water use, waste diversion and the number of poor air quality days have all made steady progress and crime rates continue to fall. The city boasts a burgeoning arts and culture scene where Hamiltonians are increasingly attending live music performances and its rental housing remains among the most affordable in the province. Hamiltonians' "sense of belonging" to their community is also one of the highest among Canadian cities.

Cooke says sharing knowledge is an important part of the foundation's goal of engaging citizens, noting an upcoming forum where a number of the city's institutions will work on the next steps in responding to neighbourhood disparity.

"We're moving ahead," he says, "but we all need to do more to build on our economic and other progress and extend it to every citizen."

Other key findings in the report include:

- Hamilton's average house prices have risen 88 percent over the last decade, but remain more affordable than provincial and national averages.
- Almost 60 percent of Hamiltonians over age 12 are overweight or obese – eight percentage points higher than the provincial and national averages. Obesity rates are higher for men than women, but both are above the comparable provincial averages.
- Overall library use grew 35 percent from 2007 to 2010 and the number of monthly digital downloads has grown 85 percent since 2009.
- Since 2004, GO Transit use from downtown has increased 32 percent. From Aldershot it is up 166 percent.
- Urban streets with bicycle lanes or paved shoulders are up 45 per cent from 100 km three years ago.

The report will be published today in the Hamilton Spectator. An extended report, including links to source data, is available at [www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca](http://www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca)

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Hamilton Community Foundation was founded in 1954 as Ontario's first community foundation. Like all community foundations, HCF has three main roles: working with donors to build funds for the future of Hamilton, granting to the widest possible range of organizations and initiatives, and fostering community leadership. Since it was founded, Hamilton Community Foundation has made grants to our community totalling almost \$65 million, including approximately \$3.8 million last year.

Contact:

Terry Cooke, President & CEO, 905-523-5600 x 224; cell: 905-977-0450

Grace Diffey, Vice-President, Community Relations, 905-523-5600 x 260, cell: 905-518-4641