

# SJ Poverty Reduction Update



June 2010

## GREATER SAINT JOHN'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

*NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER TO BREAK THE POVERTY CYCLE*



The momentum towards reducing poverty in Saint John keeps growing. Over 45 businesses, 33 government departments, 60 non-profit groups, and hundreds of people from Saint John's five priority neighborhoods, are partnering on many different initiatives.

This newsletter will give you an update on some of the latest steps towards reducing poverty in Saint John.

### Setting Targets to Reach our Goals

#### Neighbourhood Revitalization

- 100 new affordable housing units per year
- Reduction in the number of substandard housing units
- Housing strategy led by City
- Plans in place for youth transition housing
- Neighbourhoods with plans and monitoring plans in an ongoing fashion
- New partners contributing to neighbourhoods
- 100 new residents engaged per year

#### Single Parents

- Reduce teen pregnancy
- Increase child care spaces
- Young moms Mentoring Program
- High School Completion for young moms

#### Children and Youth

- 30 Youth leaders trained, 150 youth engaged from priority neighbourhoods
- Explore models to expand number of child care spaces within priority neighbourhoods
- Develop plan to increase infant child care spaces
- Develop a model to promote high-school completion
- Sustain funding for youth programs with demonstrated success
- Develop a partnership between the school district and community to respond to children not in school

#### Workforce Participation

- 200 Individuals per year participating in transition to work programs and events
- Develop neighbourhood-based recruitment strategies
- Engage 30 businesses/employers (TIES-2-Work, Catch the Wave, Job Bus)
- Develop methods to determine who many individuals from priority neighbourhoods are now participating in the workforce
- Eliminate policy barriers to employment

# Revitalize Neighbourhoods

Resident Mobilization and Training - Housing - Social, Physical and Economic Improvements

## Progress Highlights

- Substandard Housing Committee re-established
- 115 subsidized housing units allocated for 2010/2011
- New partners involved in preparing application and business plan for youth transition housing
- New Executive and Board in place for Waterloo Village Association, Courtney Bay Tenants Association Executive elected
- New partners supporting Earth Day Activities
- South End Area Community Action Team (SEACAT) begins a community kitchen

## Earth Day 2010 Spring Cleaning in the Priority Neighbourhoods

On Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> the Waterloo Village Association held their annual Earth Day clean up. Over 30 residents turned out and some 50 bags of trash were collected. The morning ended with a great BBQ enjoyed by all.

On the Lower West Side, residents collected over 25 bags of trash. They also brought bagged yard debris to the local blue bins for pick up. Children were entertained at the community centre playground, and others played a few rounds of ball hockey. The day ended with lunch, gifts and prizes. Participants had a wonderful time getting to know each other and having great conversation.

Earth Day activities were just as lively in the South End, Old North End and Crescent Valley...not to mention the amazing weather!

*Source: Lisa Chamberlain, Waterloo Village Neighbourhood Assistant, Patty Donovan, Coverdale Center for Women, Bobbi Craft, Lower West Side Neighbourhood Assistant*

## SOUTH END FOOD PURCHASING CLUB SETTING THE STAGE FOR OTHER PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS

The South End Food Purchasing Club was successfully launched in January 2010, thanks to the combined efforts of many residents and volunteers.

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> day of each month, Club members sign up and pay for a \$10, \$15 or \$20 order of fruits and vegetables. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month, volunteers bag the orders for pick-up at Centenary Queen Square Church. Members get about \$23 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables for each \$10 order. Around 15 families or singles participate each month - 31 in all since January. The organizing committee now wants to find new ways to reach out to residents.

Penni Eisenhauer, Neighbourhood Assistant for the South End, says residents are glad to see a concrete project starting from the ground up. She points out that, even though participation has been good, it's not just about numbers. *“If you can help one person or family begin eating in a healthy way, it's worth all the effort it takes to get a food purchasing club going.”*

Word is spreading to Waterloo Village, the Lower West Side and Crescent Valley, where residents have met with Penni to see how they can start food purchasing clubs in their neighbourhoods. The Food Purchasing Club began at the Community Health Centre and continues thanks to the commitment of dietician Martha McLean.

*Source: Penni Eisenhauer, South End Neighbourhood Assistant*



**Thank You  
Earth Day  
Participants  
and  
Sponsors!!**



## Housing News

- Representatives from the five priority neighbourhoods met to identify buildings that are unsafe and need to be demolished. Common council has already torn down a vacant, dilapidated building on the lower west side.
- **ONE Change Youth Council** has put together a slide show called **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly** documenting properties in the old north end that need attention.
- In March, the New Brunswick government expanded the **Residential Tenants Act** to include rooming houses. People who live in approximately 331 rooming units in Saint John will now have the same rights as people who rent apartments including access to the **Rentalsman's Office**.



For the 3rd year in a row, **Irving Oil Ltd.** is funding **Learn and Go**, a partnership between the Community Health Centre, Vibrant Communities and priority neighbourhoods. Learn and Go is a short program to provide residents with the tools to make changes in their neighbourhoods. For more information, contact Bobbie Craft at 608-3669.

# Single Parents

## Child Care – School Completion - Health & Wellness

### Progress Highlights

- **Teen Pregnancy Coalition meeting again, will set priorities in Fall 2010**
- **ONE Change exploring contraception in the neighbourhood**
- **Marketplace Wellness Centre offering health and community services**
- **5 Matches Made through Young Moms Mentoring Program; 5 more ready to match**
- **Family Resource Centre and Crescent Valley Resource Centre host a mom and tot play group**

### WEST SAINT JOHN MARKETPLACE WELLNESS CENTRE NOW OPEN...AND GROWING!

The Market Place Wellness Centre, located in the basement of the Carleton Community Centre on the West side of Saint John, officially opened in November.

The Wellness Centre has an onsite Nurse Practitioner as well as access to a Nurse Practitioner who specializes in Diabetes Education and Chronic Disease Management. The Wellness Centre also hosts a community nurse, a licensed practical nurse, community liaison and Neighbourhood Assistant. Close to 2,000 community residents have visited the Centre so far.

The Centre offers Blood/Specimen Collection, Foot Care Clinics, PICC Line care and an Anticoagulation (Blood) Clinic

Coming soon are a food purchasing club, smoking-cessation classes and a dietician-led weight management program. Residents would also like to see staff from Social Development and Post Secondary Education and Labour at the Centre on a regular basis, providing income assistance and employment services. – a true 'one-stop shopping' centre for health and wellness!

For more information about the Market Place Wellness Centre, please contact Mary Lou Price at 674-4335.

Source: Mary-Lou Price, Community Liaison, Bobbie Craft, Lower West Side Neighbourhood Assistant



## EARLY LEARNING CENTRE RECEIVES DAY CARE CERTIFICATION

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, the Early Learning Centre at St. John the Baptist/King Edward School was officially certified to have 39 daycare spaces for children 2-5 years old. The centre now has 8-12 children, and is taking registrations from families in all neighbourhoods. The Centre has three staff, including Margot Ringuette, Director. More staff will be added as registrations grow. The "Ready, Set Go" program prepares children for Kindergarten. Other programs include drop-ins for families and Moms & Tots. For more information, contact Janet Towers at the YMCA 634-2908.

Source: Shilo Boucher, Chief Operating Officer, Saint John YMCA - YWCA



# Workforce Participation

## Multiple Pathways - Barriers to Education - Employer Leadership

### Progress Highlights

- Program Participants: Power Up (24), John Howard Society (14), Ties-2-Work (15), Job Bus (12), Catch the Wave (35)
- Neighbourhood-based program recruitment and information sessions
- Human Development Council will make a presentation to NB Minimum Wage Board (September)
- 12 new businesses participating in transition to work programs in 2010 (Total to date: 25)

### TIES-2-WORK STARTS YEAR TWO SUCCESS BUILDS SUCCESS

**TIES-2-Work** matches employers with potential employees, and supports them through 12 weeks of job-specific training. TIES-2-Work focuses on skills like reading text, communication, team work, computer use and continuous learning, using real-life documents and situations from participants' future employers. As part of their training, participants spend three weeks at their future workplace. Feed-back from their employers helps participants and their facilitators pinpoint strengths and areas for growth during the remaining weeks of training. This maximizes everyone's chances for success. Multi-year funding from the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) lets the program grow and adapt to each new group of participants. PETL and Social Development are also providing staff to reach out to employers and coordinate case management.

In Year I, TIES-to-Work had 13 participants and 8 employers. There are now 8 participants in Round Three, and 8 employers have signed up to take on participants from this group. The next group begins in June.

Christina Fowler, Executive Director of the Saint John Learning Exchange, says that the involvement of partners such as the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI), has been a big part of the program's success. She also notes that TIES-2-Work is creating more awareness that GED is not the only answer to finding employment. New and creative approaches to entering the workforce can succeed when community, business and government departments focus on the skills that are truly essential in the workplace.

Source: Christina Fowler, Saint John Learning Exchange; Belinda Allen, Dept. of Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Tina Landry, Bayshore Home Health Care)

*"Ties to Work has been a very positive experience for Bayshore Home Health. Bayshore delivers home health care services to members of our community and we depend upon our caregiver staff to be compassionate, professional and reliable.*

*The Ties to Work participant that came to Bayshore was an absolute delight from day one. She accelerated through our training program because of the extra time and effort she decided to put forward.*

*Upon completion of the Ties to Work program, we have completed the successful hire of the participant, she was easy to match with a client and provides excellent care in our community."*

*Tina Landry  
Human Resource Coordinator/  
Marketing Coordinator  
BayShore Home Health*

## CONNECTING TO WORK

**Catch the Wave to Work** is a ½ day workshop for people looking for work. It helps them identify their assets, find out about current job opportunities directly from employers, and learn more about community and government resources. *I am looking for a next step and this has given me plenty of options*, a sentiment echoed by many of the 35 participants who enjoyed the chance to connect with each other, employers and resources. The next workshop will take place on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Job Bus Tour:** Usually about twelve people hop onto a van to visit four employers. They meet employers and learn the kinds of jobs that are available and the requirements for these jobs. An optional job preparation workshop takes place the week before the bus tour where people can update their resume - or develop a new one - and prepare questions to ask the employers. *It is great to speak to potential employers versus handing in resumes on your own*, says one of the participants. The next job bus tour is scheduled for the fall, although a special child care tour is being organized this the summer.

Community groups, government departments and community groups work together to organize these events. For more information, or to register, contact Cathy Wright 832-5624.

**Source:** *Cathy Wright, Vibrant Communities and Saint John Telegraph Journal*



Photo: Cindy Wilson/Telegraph Journal

# Children and Youth

Early Years – Middle years – Youth

### Progress Highlights

- **New Coordinator, Shaundell Hendricken , hired for Teen Vibe in Crescent Valley**
- **Discussions begun with YMCA and other organizations to explore interest and feasibility of expanded number of child care spaces in priority neighbourhoods**
- **ONE Change Youth Initiative Project funds in place**
- **39 new child care spaces through the Early Learning Centre**

### YOUTH COUNCILS TAKING THE LEAD

On Global Youth Service Day (April 23-25) youth from Saint John shared the great work they are doing in a live video broadcast to other youth around the world.

In Crescent Valley, *Teen Vibe* Members cleaned up and painted a fence in Taylor Park. The Teen Resource Centre, the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club raised funds to buy rice for Haiti. In the Old North End, over 150 bags of garbage were collected in an Earth-day style clean-up.

The youth councils are all about community service, recreation, and leadership development for 15-18 year-olds. They are meeting this challenge head-on with tons of energy!



The **ONE Change Youth Council** started in 2009. They have set up brightly-painted garbage barrels throughout the Old North End, organized fundraisers for friends needing medical treatment and for Haiti. The Green Team runs a recycling group and brings environmental awareness to Lorne School. Each week, there are sports activities and a drop-in, as well as planned activities for guys and teen girls. Every day teens take kids from Lorne to two different churches for a hot lunch program.

**Teen Vibe** in Crescent Valley is in its third year of a 3-year program, funded by Meighan Family Foundation, A new full-time coordinator has been hired. Teens were part of the interview committee and made the final choice of who to hire.

Youth councils are helping young people connect with other activities and organizations in the community, bringing teens and adults together. They are a safe place for youth to make their own choices and learn from experience. Even more than that, in their own words, the Councils are living proof that 'teens are not all bad ' and their neighbourhoods are a good place to live and learn!

Source: *Jeremy McAulay & Gina Reid, ONE Change, Brad Snodgrass & Laura Basque, Teen Vibe, Scott Crawford, Teen Resource Center*



## HAZEN WHITE – ST FRANCIS PALS SCHOOL, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER

Hazen White –St. Francis School is a very busy spot these days!

Working with Horizon Health Network, Xerox, Château de Champlain, UNBSJ, Unitarian Universalist Church of Canada, St. Pius X Church, Saint Peter's Church, Stewart McKelvey and Sun Life Financial, the school and community have put into place many exciting activities and programs:-

- Family literacy nights
- Information sessions to prepare children and their families for kindergarten
- Kindergarten students make regular visits to the Chateau de Champlain retirement home to 'Adopt a Grandparent'.
- The ELF program provides learning support to early learners
- UNBSJ students are drawing up plans for a skate pad and providing 1-on-1 mentoring in reading and math.
- Budding actors can attend events at the Imperial theatre and participate in workshops with the Interactive Children's theatre.
- A breakfast and lunch program, yoga and badminton are helping everyone keep active and healthy

The PALS program at Hazen White-St. Francis began in 2007 and the results are clear. Students are getting better reading, math and science scores. Enrollment in kindergarten is growing and children are better prepared to start school. Most importantly, the school is building even closer ties with families in Crescent Valley, which makes up 98% of the K-8 student body at Hazen White-St-Francis.

Source: *Cameron Badger, PALS Coordinator and Jennifer Carhart, Principal Hazen White St. Francis School*



*Photo: Peter Walsh/Telegraph Journal*



The staff of **ONE L.I.F.E.** (Living Independently for Education) has met with approximately 80 youth and housed 10 youth in the last 2 years. **Tannery Court** recently set aside 5 units for youth 19 and up, starting October 2010, and the **Saint John Sea Dogs** recently gave ONE LIFE a grant of \$500 to sponsor a participant. Currently, ONE LIFE has four youth living independently and receiving ongoing support with issues such as mental illness, addictions and education. It has a waiting list of approximately 75 youth, mostly female.

# What's Happening with the New Brunswick Poverty Reduction Strategy?

**A total of \$15 million has been set aside in the provincial budget for Poverty Reduction. Most of this is going toward policy changes in Social Development, including**

## Health Card Benefits Extended

- As of December 9, 2009 The Extended Health Card benefit is now available for up to three years for clients who are leaving social assistance for a job. This will help about 2,600 people in New Brunswick over the course of a fiscal year, at a cost of about \$2.7 million.

## Interim Assistance Rate Eliminated

- Starting January 1, 2010, social assistance clients who qualified for the Interim Assistance Program rate of \$294 a month, now qualify for benefits under the Transitional Assistance Program. This is an 82% increase in their monthly cheque. This change in policy will affect 1,089 people in New Brunswick, at a cost of about \$2.8 million.

## Household Income Policy Changed

- On February 17, 2010 improvements were made to the Household Income Policy, also called the "Economic Unit Policy". People who received social assistance on January 1, 2010 and who are in non-spousal relationships, for example, who are sharing accommodations with a friend, will be able to share accommodations with other income assistance clients or non clients and receive separate cheques. This change in policy will affect around 2,450 people and cost \$5-6 Million.

## Minimum Wage Increases

- On January 5, 2010 increases to New Brunswick's minimum wage were announce that will see it rise to \$10 by September 1, 2011. This will help some 1,500 New Brunswickers improve their standard of living.

*"Through the collaboration of governments, business and non-profit sectors, people living in poverty and individual citizens, all men, women and children in New Brunswick shall have the necessary resources to meet their basic needs and to live with dignity, security and good health. Furthermore all New Brunswickers shall be included as full citizens through opportunities for employment, personal development and community engagement....By 2015, New Brunswick will have reduced income poverty by 25% and deep income poverty by 50%, and will have made significant progress in achieving sustained economic and social inclusion."*

*Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick's Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*

## What's Coming

The Economic and Social Inclusion Act, introduced in the New Brunswick legislature on February 19, 2010, created the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation. The four vice chairs of the board of directors of the corporation are Social Development Minister Kelly Lamrock; Monique Richard; Gerry Pond; and Léo-Paul Pinet. James Hughes, Deputy Minister, Department of Social Development, will be its President. There will be a 22-member board of directors representing government; business; community non-profit organizations; and at least 8 citizens who have experienced living in poverty. The act also includes setting up local community inclusion networks that will be responsible for local priority setting. Vibrant Communities Saint John has been a key player in this process from the beginning and the VCSJ Leadership Roundtable is proposing to the Vice Chairs of the Economic and Social Inclusion Board to become the Greater Saint John Community Inclusion Network



# Leading Poverty Reduction

## Vibrant Communities Saint John Leadership Roundtable

Fern Bennett  
Shilo Boucher  
Monica Chaperlin  
Don Connolly  
Debbie Cooper  
Ivan Court  
Terri-Ann Cormier  
Elaine Daley  
Craig Estabrooks  
Regena Farnsworth (Chair)  
Mary Eileen Flanagan  
Debbie Godlewski  
Nathalie Godbout  
Randy Hatfield  
Trevor Holder  
Gregor Hope  
Elizabeth Jadoo  
Lyn King  
Mark Leger  
Grace Losier  
Brian Marks  
Peter McGuire  
Brenda Murphy  
Lisa Murphy  
Mike Murphy  
Sister Roma De Robertis  
Nancy Savoie  
Carolyn VandenBerg  
Angela Carr  
Carolyn Stephenson  
Susan Tipper  
Pat Woods

Make Poverty History  
Fusion, YM/WCA  
Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative  
Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation  
Saint John Boys and Girls Club  
Mayor- City of Saint John  
Community Representative  
Belyea, Colwell and Associates  
Rodney Weston's Office  
Dean Faculty of Business – UNB Saint John  
SJ Board of Police Commissioners  
Public Health Services, Horizon Health Network  
Business person  
Human Development Council  
Member of the Legislature  
Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative  
Greater Saint John Area United Way  
Community Representative  
Community Member  
Mayor- Grand Bay Westfield  
Social Development  
City of Saint John, Common Council  
Urban Core Support Network  
Resident  
Saint John Board of Trade  
Sisters of Charity  
Resident- Crescent Valley  
Irving Oil Ltd  
Non-Profit Secretariat (Fredericton)  
Service Canada  
School District 8  
City of Saint John

## Neighbourhood Assistants

Old North End - Melissa Moore 635-2035 [oldnorthendna@gmail.com](mailto:oldnorthendna@gmail.com)  
Crescent Valley - Laura Basque, 721-0010 [crescentvalleyassistant@gmail.com](mailto:crescentvalleyassistant@gmail.com)  
Lower Westside, Bobbie Craft 608-3669, [lwsassistant@gmail.com](mailto:lwsassistant@gmail.com)  
South End - Penni Eisenhauer 652-9799, [southendassistant@gmail.com](mailto:southendassistant@gmail.com).  
Village Neighbourhood – Lisa Chamberlain, 652-7903, [wvassistant@gmail.com](mailto:wvassistant@gmail.com)

## Neighbourhood Associations

Old North End - [ONE Change](#)  
Crescent Valley - [Crescent Valley Resource Centre](#) and [Crescent Valley Community Tenants Association](#)  
South End - South Centre Citizen's Council, [PULSE \(People United in the Lower South End\)](#), [SEACAT \(South End Area Community Action Team\)](#)  
Waterloo Village - [The Village Association](#)  
Lower West Side - [Westside PACT](#)

## Vibrant Communities Saint John Staff

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