



2012

# Poverty Reduction Strategy For City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton



Poverty Reduction Strategy, June 2012

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### What is the Urgency?

At its most basic, poverty was defined during our community consultations as the inability to meet the basic needs of life (i.e. housing, clothing, and food). The financial challenges of living pay cheque to pay cheque; choosing which bills to pay; and being in overdraft were highlighted. Specific reference was also made to never being able to afford any extras (haircut, school trips, meal out).

Focus Group Quote:

**"Poverty is about feeling a sense of hopelessness and constant struggling; not meeting children's needs, losing dignity and feeling judged by the community."**

In 1989, the House of Commons passed a resolution to eliminate poverty among Canadian children. At that time, Statistics Canada reported there were 500,000 children in our country living below the poverty line. Despite government and multi-sector commitments on all levels, a decade later the number climbed to 900,000 children living in poverty. Reducing poverty is complex.

More Ontarians than ever are living pay cheque to pay cheque according to a Canadian Payroll Association survey conducted a year ago. In fact, 60% of younger Ontarians (18-34) report living from pay cheque to pay cheque and 40% of Canadians will retire later than they planned.

The City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County councils recognize that the cost of poverty for all of us is serious and rising. Poverty costs individual households between \$2,300 and \$2,900 per year according to the Ontario Association of Food Banks.<sup>1</sup>

The Federal and Ontario governments are losing at least \$10.4 billion to \$13.1 billion a year due to poverty (10.8 to 16.6 per cent of the provincial budget).

If child poverty were eliminated, the extra income tax revenues nationally would be between \$3.1 billion and \$3.8 billion, while for Ontario, the additional (federal and provincial) taxes would amount to \$1.3 billion to \$1.6 billion.

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<sup>1</sup> The Cost of Poverty. An Analysis of the Economic Cost of Poverty in Ontario, November 2008.

The economic downturn is hurting the health of Canadians. People with lower income and lower education are affected the most. The wellness gap is increasing, the gap between higher and lower income has grown substantially wider in terms of how respondents perceive their health. This year, higher income respondents are 29 percentage points more likely to describe their health as excellent or very good in comparison to lower income respondents. In 2009, the gap between the two groups was 17 points.<sup>2</sup>

Wellness is a positive state of feeling good and functioning well that enables people to achieve their full potential, enjoy quality of life, and contribute positively to their community.

Canadians were asked whether financial concerns stemming from the economic downturn have led them to take any of several actions adverse to their health. The results show that as a result of financial concerns, those with lower levels of income and education are more prone to engage in adverse health behaviours.

Nationally, one in three Canadians (34%) say that they feel stressed and/or overwhelmed as a result of financial concerns. This number rises to fewer than half (46%) among those who earn less than \$30,000 annually, while it decreases among those who earn more than \$60,000 (30%).

Poverty affects us all and is costing each household up to \$2,900 a year. Working full time at minimum wage does not provide enough income to raise a family out of poverty. Families in the lowest income bracket are living on an average of \$16,100 per year. When we reduce poverty we reduce health and social services costs – a cost saving for taxpayers. We create improved health conditions, increased education outcomes, better job and training opportunities, and increased community engagement which are important for all of us.

## Everyone Has a Role

Following a presentation to City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) Council in the fall of 2010, by the Access to Permanent Housing Committee and the Poverty Coalition, both CKL and County of Haliburton (Haliburton) Councils approved the development of a joint strategy in early 2011. The development of the strategy has been a community project spearheaded by both Councils. “The strength of our community is defined by our weakest link. It is important to support others in need to build a strong community that includes everyone so that we all prosper and succeed,” said Kawartha Lakes Mayor,

<sup>2</sup> 2012 National Report Card Report, Canadian Medical Association, August 2012.

Ric McGee. Haliburton County Warden, Murray Fearrey stressed the importance of an effective strategy for the County. “Reducing poverty in the County of Haliburton will benefit everyone. This is a great opportunity for our community to increase the quality of life for all our residents.”

Through a consensus of community agencies, the Technology Alliance Group for Kawartha Lakes (TAG) was identified as the lead agency to develop the strategy; and TAG partnered with the John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton and U-Links Centre for Community Based Research in Haliburton County to undertake the project and form the working group. The working group has conducted research and is delivering this report in collaboration with a steering committee formed for this purpose - a real team approach.

This report is the result of a very unique process. The City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton are collaborating on the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, joining efforts to work on this common issue. The councils requested a grass roots approach; therefore the team conducted a community consultation through:

- Focus groups of service providers and their clients were hosted in both Haliburton and the City of Kawartha Lakes;
- An extensive, in-depth survey based on focus group input was developed by U-Links Centre for Community Based Research and conducted on line. Service providers completed the survey with their own insights and also assisted clients with their responses;
- A targeted survey was implemented to ensure that the voices of people living below the poverty line were included;
- A local collaborative forum – “Poverty to Possibilities” – was held in Haliburton which brought community-wide social services agencies together to learn the work of others, while sharing information and best practices; and
- Academic research was conducted to inform the work as it proceeded and to inform the development of the poverty reduction strategy.

(Refer to Appendix 1: Bringing the Community Together)



Quotation posted at the Poverty Forum: a poignant reminder of homelessness in our communities.

Our community clearly has a vision of being a place where people can overcome adversity and reach their full potential. We advocate for a community of economic prosperity with all citizens able to reach their full potential. A community approach was adopted and considerable community consultations were conducted; however, the team feels that this report needs to be a living document, representing a preliminary step in the process. Reducing poverty is a complex task affected by many factors which have been identified as themes in this report. People experience poverty for a variety of reasons, and the solutions are just as varied. This report creates a foundation of information and demonstrates that bringing sectors together to act locally and collaboratively is an effective way to identify concrete actions to reduce poverty locally. It is an initial step in a collaborative effort to bring a high profile to poverty reduction in our communities and take concrete actions at the municipal and community levels.

The Poverty to Possibilities Forum was a dynamic event bringing together social service providers from both communities. The participants provided a loud and clear message that they are ready to aggressively work on the common issues related to poverty.

Key factors were immediately identified:

- ★ There is a human cost to poverty;
- ★ There is a financial gain when we reduce poverty;
- ★ Lessons can be learned from other communities;
- ★ Successful outcomes will happen because we recognize that poverty puts people at risk for good health, reduces educational opportunities, creates housing crisis and other similar challenges;
- ★ Citizen involvement is key to help define the impact for individuals and for the respective communities;
- ★ The pathway cannot be singular, insular nor self-serving by partners or communities;
- ★ Although we all want to rush to solutions, finding the right place to begin the work is complex and complicated.



The information collected for this report, and future consultations, will inform future action, but action has to be started now.

**Recommendation #1- Establish a Community Driven Group (CDG) to oversee implementation of strategies over the long term.**

The role of this group will include evaluation, research, advocacy and awareness.

The following characteristics of the CDG were generated from the community consultation and the forum:

**CDG Operating Principles**

- Give a voice to poverty
- All people have choice
- Work collaboratively on solutions
- Put ourselves out of business

**CDG Areas of Focus**

- Increase awareness about the impact and cost of poverty in Haliburton-CKL
- Advocate with community partners and all levels of government for solutions
- Enhance employment access and supports
- Increase access to nutritious and affordable food
- Increase access to affordable and stable accommodation
- Ensure broad community ownership of future strategies
- Look for local talent – explore opportunities to combine services
- Focus on neighbourhoods and smaller communities as a place for change
- Use awareness and advocacy strategies to change perceptions and systems

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead.

**Recommendation #2 – Establish theme-based working groups (i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

The CDG needs to determine which themes are priorities and establish corresponding sub-committees (theme groups) to work on those priorities. Theme groups within the community driven group (CDG) engage people based on their areas of interest and expertise; however, it is extremely important to maintain contact with the larger group to benefit from the birds-eye view of the overall effort to reduce poverty. Organizations and individuals interested in each theme were identified at the Poverty to Possibilities Forum. This is a good starting point for establishing theme working group membership. A list of additional people was also established at the Forum and should be consulted to ensure that all sectors are represented (Agriculture, Arts & Culture, Business, Education, Government, Health, Law Enforcement, People with Lived Experience, Religion, Service Providers & Sports & Recreation).

Theme groups of the CDG could inventory local programs and specifically look for ways to avoid overlap and enhance access. In fact, coordinating groups already exist in many areas. The local program inventory has been initiated through this report and published on the poverty website: <http://poverty2possibilities.ca/>. Specific actions generated from information gathered through the community consultation have been suggested as starting points for these theme groups.

## BACKGROUND

In Ontario in 2008, the provincial government initiated development of a provincial poverty reduction strategy. Many communities followed suit, creating strategies to address their communities' needs. How do we in the City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) and the County of Haliburton (Haliburton) bring this to life in our communities, given their unique demographics and geography?

So many in our communities are able to work if they choose to, go home to a warm, safe house, eat a variety of healthy food, drive in a safe vehicle, access a range of health care options, pay for medication, put a child in a recreation or other programs, and make other life choices. They are indeed fortunate. So how can we help ensure that everyone in the county has those same basic necessities?

**These are the local facts in CKL and Haliburton:**

- Working full-time at minimum wage does not provide enough income to raise a family above the poverty line.
- The unemployment rate increased from 8.7 per cent in May 2010 to 9.3 per cent in May 2011. This was the second highest unemployment rate among all 11 economic regions in Ontario.
- Families in the lowest income bracket are living on an average income of \$16,100 per year.
- 12.1 per cent of children aged 17 years and under live in low-income families.
- Low-income families have poorer health, more emergency room visits and live shorter lives.
- One in six people needing dental treatment avoid going to the dentist because of cost.
- Between September 2007 and September 2008, Lindsay saw a 39.3 per cent increase in the number of people using food banks. This was the third highest increase in all of Ontario.
- Families on social assistance spend at least 60% of their income on non-subsidized housing and utilities, twice the amount for shelter recommended by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This leaves very little for other basics such as food, clothing, transportation and personal care items.
- The average cost for a licensed, non-subsidized daycare for a two-and-a-half to four-year old is \$31 per day, or \$620 per month.
- Many families are working non-standard hours and require more flexible childcare.
- Individuals in our community struggle every day to make ends meet.

*(HKPR Health Unit, 2011 Rethink Poverty: Change Minds)*

In 2011, inspired by a presentation by the Kawartha Lakes Access to Permanent Housing Committee and the Poverty Coalition, the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton councils resolved to partner to develop a poverty reduction strategy.

The Technology Alliance Group for Kawartha Lakes (TAG) was identified as the lead agency to develop and draft the poverty reduction strategy. TAG partnered with the John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton (JHSLH) and the U-Links Centre for Community Based Research (U-Links) in Haliburton County.

The goals of the poverty reduction strategy are to:

- Clearly identify the impact of poverty in the municipalities;
- Define how poverty can be measured to evaluate the impact of changes, programs etc.;
- Identify clearly defined goals and objectives;
- Include an Action Plan to identify specific recommendations;
- Be inclusive of all sectors and populations in both municipalities.

This report to the councils of the City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton outlines:

1. The work-to-date pursuant to Resolution CR2010-1359;
2. Initial findings, categorized by identified themes; and
3. Elements for change: actions for developing and implementing a comprehensive and impactful strategy to reduce poverty in our communities.

Over the last year, we have realized that there is a lot to do, a lot going on. The community conversations and actions need to continue in order to make a difference in the lives of people experiencing poverty in our communities. This report is a living document that will need to change and respond to the reality of life in our communities over time. It will not provide all the answers to reducing poverty but identifies some steps in the right direction.

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

Engaging the community to provide solutions to poverty was a priority of the councils; therefore the following methodology was implemented:

- Focus groups of service providers and their clients were hosted in both Haliburton and the City of Kawartha Lakes;
- An extensive, in-depth survey based on focus group input was developed by U-Links Centre for Community Based Research and conducted on line. Service providers completed the survey with their own insights and also assisted clients with their responses;
- A targeted survey was implemented to ensure that the voices of people living below the poverty line were included;
- A local collaborative forum – “Poverty to Possibilities” – was held in Haliburton which brought community-wide social services agencies together to learn the work of others, while sharing information and best practices; and
- Academic research was conducted to inform the work as it proceeded and to inform the development of the poverty reduction strategy.

(Refer to Appendix 1: Bringing the Community Together)

The focus groups involved 96 clients and 77 service providers, with a total of 173 people. From CKL participants were made up of 42 service providers and 66 clients. In Haliburton there were 35 service providers and 44 clients.

(Refer to Appendix 2: Focus Group Report)

The in-depth survey was available on-line or in printed format and was completed by front-line agency workers, either from a personal perspective or as information input from their clients. Completed surveys totalled 391. Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents had never experienced poverty while 17% were currently living in poverty and 15% identified experiencing poverty in the last 5 years. Sixty-four percent (64%) were employed full time, with the majority working in health care, education, or administration. Approximately 70% were between the ages of 35 and 64. Overall, this survey solicited responses from the social service sector in both communities but engaged a smaller sampling of people living in poverty.

(Refer to Appendix 3: In-Depth Survey Questions, and Appendix 4: In-Depth Survey Report)

The targeted survey collected 434 responses from clients living below the poverty line: 327 from CKL and 107 from Haliburton. In CKL, 79% of responses were from people living in Lindsay, which reflects the efforts of the service providers in that area. Five percent (5%) were from Fenelon Falls and 3% from Little Britain, with other communities at 2% or less. In Haliburton, there was representation from all four municipalities, although Algonquin Highlands is underrepresented. Dysart et al made up 40%,

Minden Hills 26%, Algonquin Highlands at 4% and Highlands East 30%. There was a fairly even age distribution in both areas.

(Refer to Appendix 5: Targeted Survey Questions and Appendix 6: Targeted Survey Report)

The Poverty to Possibilities forum occurred on June 19 & 20, 2012. This event was a catalyst for the implementation of coordinated poverty reduction work in our communities. Information gathered at this event is included in the appendices.

(Refer to: Appendix 7: Forum Backgrounder)



CKL Councillor, Doug Elmslie addressing Poverty Forum.

## Community Consultation Results

The community consultations provided unique insight into what poverty looks like in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County.

During the focus groups with local service providers and clients, poverty was defined, at its most basic, as the inability to meet the basic needs of life, including housing, clothing, and food. The financial challenges and stress of living “pay check to pay check” and prioritizing which bills to pay was also mentioned as defining realities of living in poverty. Reference was made to the inability to afford what service providers and clients identified as “life’s extras”: haircuts, school trips and meals out. The focus group participants also described poverty, from their individual experiences, as a personal sense of hopelessness and constant struggle; not meeting their children’s needs, losing their dignity, and feeling judged by members of the community. In this way, the results of the focus groups indicate that poverty is about individual circumstances, the services available to help people, and attitudes in the community. (Refer to Appendix 2: Focus Group Report)

Poverty reduction efforts across Canada highlight the interconnectedness of the issues facing those experiencing poverty.<sup>3, 4, 5</sup> While at the program level many of these themes are tackled separately, their interdependence points to the need for coordinated community efforts. The establishment of community roundtables is one major strategy aimed at addressing this.<sup>6</sup> In a time where social services cuts are increasing, it is also important to consider the sustainability of volunteer-driven efforts and the not-for-profit sector. These three topics provide a lens for thinking about actions and priorities later in the report:

1. Interconnectedness of the issues;
2. Coordination of community efforts;
3. Addressing sustainability of individuals and organizations.

Through the focus groups, recurring, specific themes were identified around which efforts to reduce poverty could best be actualized. These themes became the foundation for both the in-depth and targeted surveys and the expert-lead forum: Employment, Transportation, Child Care, Food, Housing, Living vs. Getting By, Accessing Services, and Attitudes/Advocacy. This section highlights the results from each theme and lists organizations in our communities that are working in the theme area already (Lists are not exhaustive). Suggestions provided through the surveys are organized by short-term relief, capacity building, and systems change.<sup>7</sup>

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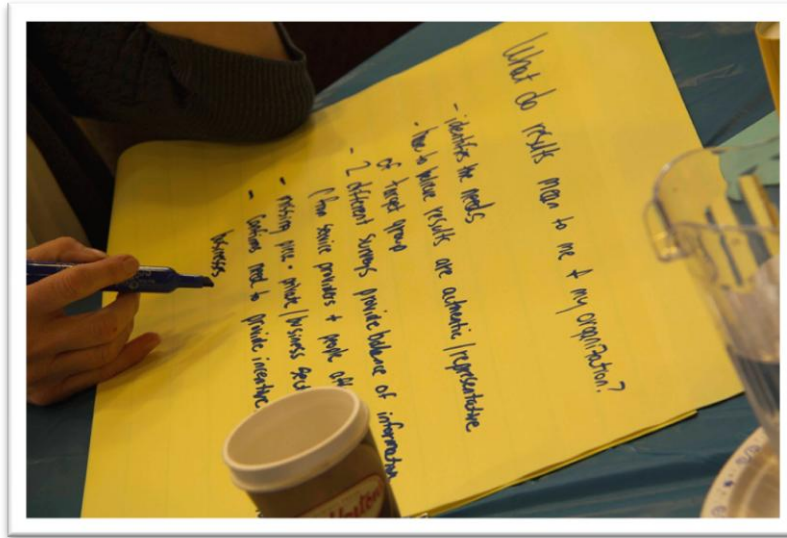
<sup>3</sup> Final Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> HKPR Health Unit, 2008, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Graham, S; Atkey, J; Reeves, C; & Goldberg, M., 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategies: Hamilton, Kingston, Windsor, Northumberland, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Food Security Projects, 2005.



Participants brainstorming at Poverty Forum



## EMPLOYMENT

Gainful employment for everyone was identified as key to reducing poverty. An adequate income provided through good-paying work is needed for food, housing, clothing, and other goods and services. Income has been identified by Health Canada as the single most important determinant of health.<sup>8</sup> People with low-paying jobs, unstable jobs, insufficient hours of work, and those who rely on government sources for income, such as Ontario Works, and Old Age Security, are more likely to have a lower income.<sup>9</sup>

In both Haliburton and CKL, compared with the rest of Ontario, incomes are lower, unemployment is higher, and government transfers make up a larger percentage of income.

Median after-tax income:<sup>10</sup>

	Haliburton	CKL	Ontario
Household with parents and children	\$57,559	\$66,596	\$74,095
One person household	\$20,762	\$22,705	\$26,473

Income from government transfers in Ontario is 9.8%. However, in Haliburton County it is 19.7% and 14.1% in the City of Kawartha Lakes. The City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton have a population of seniors who are living on Old Age Security; and seasonal work in the area results in income fluctuations for residents relying on Ontario Works. This means that more people in our communities are living on fixed incomes with limited opportunity to augment their income.

Unemployment was reported in the 2006 census as: 7.5% in Haliburton, 6.2% in CKL, and 6.4% in Ontario.<sup>11</sup> More recently, our region (including Muskoka and Northumberland) was identified as having the second highest unemployment rate among all 11 economic regions in Ontario.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> HKPR Health Unit, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> SDOH in Haliburton County: A Report Card, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> HKPR, 2011.

Targeted survey respondents are primarily working in retail, construction, and in professional settings (for example; bookkeeper, client support worker, secretary). Those who are unemployed identified the following top three sectors as ones they would like to work in: Retail (23%), Accommodation and food services (21%), Health care and social services (28%).<sup>13</sup> These sectors could present opportunities for job creation.

Through the consultation process, strategies to combat barriers to employment were identified as needing to increase:

- Providing access to transportation;
- Providing opportunities for job training;
- Providing access to affordable, flexible child care;
- Increasing the number of larger businesses in our area;
- Offering employer incentive programs; and
- Providing self-employment programs.

Service providers also commented on the level of education as it relates to job skills and the lack of apprentice opportunities locally.

The Innovative Employment Approaches and Programs for Low-Income Families report<sup>14</sup> suggests four areas for innovation:

1. Service-focused employment preparation: combining employment with other services to address job readiness and barriers to employment;
2. Employment based Experience: subsidized employment that includes training, support, and supervision;
3. Skills Development – employer based that includes funding (wage top up) as incentive for businesses to participate; and
4. Income and Work supports.

While attracting a larger employer is a solution put forward in both the focus groups and the surveys, economic development efforts need to consider both the amount and the type of employment as they

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<sup>13</sup> In-depth Survey.

<sup>14</sup> Innovative Employment Approaches and Programs for Low-Income Families, Martinson & Holcomb, 2007.

make decisions about where to focus their efforts. The need to consider what is a fair living wage was also raised in the context of working people who are struggling to make ends meet.<sup>15</sup>

Building capacity through strengthening our labour force was a theme that emerged through the community consultation. The need for more educational opportunities offered locally was expressed by service providers.<sup>16</sup> Establishing/enhancing self-employment assistance programs (i.e. Self-Employment Benefits Program (SEB)<sup>17</sup>), training/apprenticeship programs, and local employer incentive programs are all suggestions that were identified in the surveys.<sup>18, 19</sup> Apprenticeships in the trades and hospitality were seen as the most beneficial for our region.<sup>20</sup> All of these options need to consider the barriers to employment identified through the community consultation including childcare and transportation.

Thinking about employment and income at the systems change level will require additional community consultation. This study did not engage the business community or economic development departments. The development of an employment strategy for the region, or by county, identifying appropriate industries for year-round jobs, extending the season, and policies for hiring locally are all important next steps at the local level. Systems change for those who require income assistance is another area of focus. For example, in the Waterloo Region, the Employment and Income Support Community Advisory Committee (EISCAC) reports to the Community Services Committee and is composed of members representing the community and key stakeholders, including social assistance recipients (both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program). The Committee provides advice on employment and income support programs delivered by Social Services for the betterment of services to the residents of the Region of Waterloo.<sup>21</sup> This community consultation identified the need to address the disincentives to working while on Ontario Works and the ODSP.<sup>22</sup>

### Groups in Our Communities

- City of Kawartha Lakes
- Community Legal Clinic
- Community Living - Job Quest
- Community Living Kawartha Lakes
- County of Haliburton
- Fleming College

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<sup>15</sup> Community Consultation.

<sup>16</sup> Focus Groups.

<sup>17</sup> Link to SEB: <http://www.jobskills.org/seb/>

<sup>18</sup> Targeted Survey.

<sup>19</sup> In-depth Survey.

<sup>20</sup> In-depth survey.

<sup>21</sup> Rod Sutherland, Email Communication.

<sup>22</sup> Focus Groups.

- Haliburton County Development Corporation
- Kawartha Lakes Community Futures Development Corporation
- SIRCH Community Services
- United Way for the City of Kawartha Lakes
- VCCS Career Services

## TRANSPORTATION

Issues of transportation are perennial in rural areas. The specifics vary between Haliburton and CKL as public transportation exists in Lindsay. Information about recent rural transit efforts in CKL can be found at <http://www.city.kawarthalakes.on.ca/residents/transportation/rural-transit-routes>. In Haliburton, there have been several research studies looking at various options.<sup>23, 24, 25, 26, 27</sup> These projects have been coordinated through the Rural Transportation Options Committee, which is a committee of Environment Haliburton. This group is working on pulling information together during the fall of 2012.

The main issues are affordability of existing public transportation and the need for options to be developed beyond public transportation systems. All models of public transportation have high levels of subsidy, whether they are urban or rural. In rural areas, the following strategies for providing transportation should be considered:<sup>28, 29</sup>

- Partnering in rural areas
- Central “booking” point for a variety of transportation services (health appointments, travel to work, car/ride sharing)
- Ride Sharing
- Car Sharing
- Active Transportation
- Public seats on the school bus

Transportation is a key issue and relates to employability and access to child care, food, health services, and social programs. It is the one issue that arose in every theme related to poverty reduction, whether it is about access to health care, a way to get to work, or taking advantage of child care and recreation opportunities; transportation was identified as one of the top concerns.<sup>30</sup> According to the Air Pollution

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<sup>23</sup> Kirkbride, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Cathcart, 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Naylor, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Nguyen, 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Loucks, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Kirkbride, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Transport Canada, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Community Consultation.

Coalition of Ontario (2006), the expenditures for household transportation increase by 17-22% in low-density areas like rural CKL and Haliburton. It is also an issue that touches every age group, particularly the seniors' population.<sup>31, 32</sup> Service providers identified transportation as a significant barrier as well.<sup>33, 34</sup> The main issues are affordability of existing public transportation and developing options for transportation needs that are not served by public systems. It is a standalone issue that touches all other themes included in this report.

In 2006, more than 90% of the employed population in CKL and Haliburton drove a motorized vehicle to get to work.<sup>35</sup> A program for supporting car repair and insurance costs would serve a need for those working in low-paying jobs.<sup>36</sup> Organizations with vehicles can look at how to stretch their mandates to increase use of their vehicles.<sup>37</sup>

Creating more capacity to provide transportation in our communities can come in many forms. Exploring the option of utilizing school buses has been successful in other areas<sup>38</sup> and could utilize existing routes.<sup>39</sup> Ride sharing and car sharing are not new ideas and have been implemented successfully in many other communities.<sup>40, 41, 42</sup> Supporting the coordination of a ride-sharing program and publicizing the concept of car sharing is a viable option in a rural setting. The Communities in Action Committee (Haliburton) has explored many strategies which would increase infrastructure to support rural active transportation in parts of our communities where it is feasible. Reports are accessible through their website at <http://www.haliburtoncooperative.on.ca/CIA/our-projects>.

At the systemic level, there will always be challenges associated with the cost of transportation in rural areas. Increasing transportation subsidies for those in need could arguably contribute to alleviating barriers to employment and other services. Coordinating and advocating for funding for transportation

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<sup>31</sup> Steffler, N. & Kaldewat, L., n.d.

<sup>32</sup> Hunt, B. & Fletcher, A., 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Focus groups.

<sup>34</sup> SDOH in Haliburton Report Card, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Statistics Canada.

<sup>36</sup> Targeted Survey.

<sup>37</sup> Forum Discussion.

<sup>38</sup> TransporAction. <http://www.mrcpontiac.qc.ca/en/community/community.htm>.

<sup>39</sup> Forum Discussion.

<sup>40</sup> Kirkbride, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Transport Canada, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Loucks, 2012.

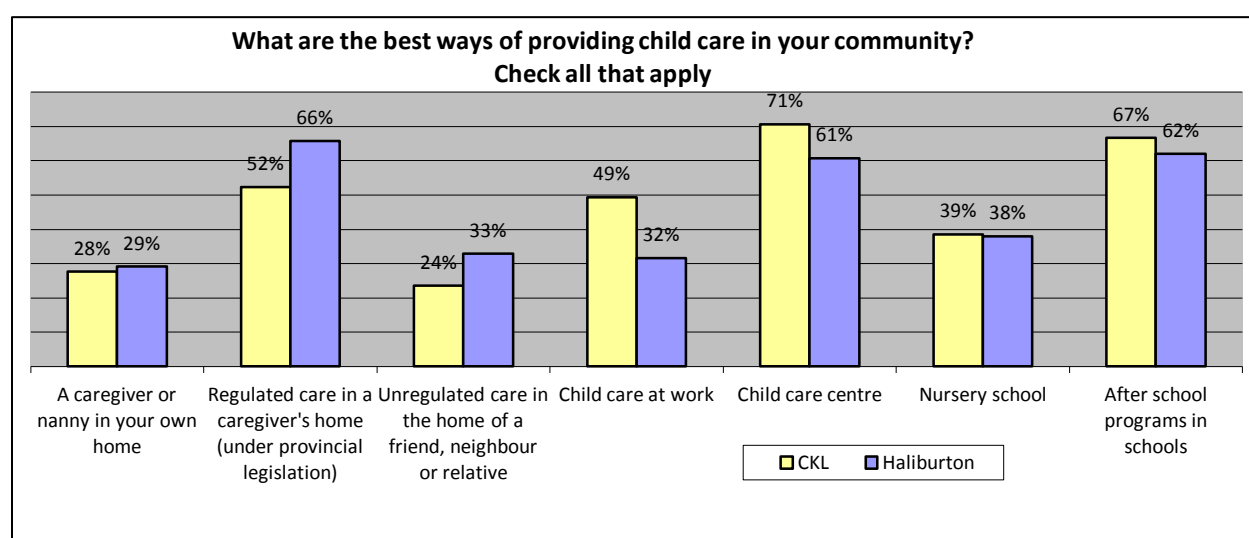
connected to all social service programs in our community could maximize existing resources and contribute to the better coordination of services.

**Groups in Our Communities**

- CKL Transit Advisory Committee
- Communities in Action Committee – Haliburton
- Community Care – highlighting the role of volunteers
- Community Legal Clinic
- Community Living Kawartha Lakes
- Kawartha Haliburton Children’s Aid Society
- Kawartha Lakes Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Rural Transportation Options – Haliburton
- Taxi Companies
- United Way for the City of Kawartha Lakes
- Volunteer drivers attached to various organizations  
(Community Care, SIRCH, Point in Time, Cancer Society, etc.)

## CHILD CARE

Affordability of child care was identified as a concern in both areas. Flexible hours and after-hours services are also important considerations for those who are working outside the 9-5 work day. Future research on the relationship between employment and access to child care would be instructive in terms of what types of programming to promote (i.e. support for stay-at-home parents or child care in the workplace). There is currently a review of the child care system going on provincially to modernize the system (<http://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2012/06/making-child-care-work-for-families.html>), which is due for completion in 2013. Provincial licensing standards are also accessible through the Ministry of Education for both private home and child care centres (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/licensingstandards.html>).



Immediate relief efforts should focus on increasing affordable after-hours child care options. Existing programs can also work to include child care as part of their offerings, where this is not already in place. This was mentioned particularly in relation to access to recreation programs.<sup>43</sup>

Increasing our local capacity by providing babysitting and ECE courses locally is another suggestion that came from the community consultation. This could be connected to school-based programs.<sup>44</sup> Additional research should be completed focusing on parent-led co-op models and how to encourage in-home licensing.

Systems change may come from the provincial review. Suggestions included: tax incentives for stay-at-home parents; extending OW child care benefit when back to work; and increased subsidies for existing child care options.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Community Consultation.

<sup>44</sup> Targeted Survey.

<sup>45</sup> Community Consultation.



**Groups in Our Communities**

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Kawartha Lakes
- Ontario Early Years Centres  
(Licensed child care in Minden, as well as some on-site support for OEYC programs)
- Point in Time
- SIRCH  
(Child care and children's programming in relation to some group programs)

## FOOD & BASIC NEEDS

Access to food in general and access to healthy food more specifically came out in the focus groups and both surveys. There were several concerns about how to access existing food banks and the stigma that accompanies using this resource.

Food security is: “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.<sup>46</sup> Food security was identified in the focus groups as an issue for people experiencing poverty.

In the HKPR Health Unit District, 13.5% of households experience food insecurity.<sup>47</sup> Less than half the people living below the low income cut-off are able to eat adequate, healthy food all the time.<sup>48</sup> The use of local food banks is on the rise in our area. The Minden food bank reported an increase of 17.5%, with a total of 213 registered families, including 368 adults, 181 children and 20 seniors in July 2012.<sup>49</sup> The Food Source in Lindsay reported serving 2200-2500 people per month.<sup>50</sup> Meals on Wheels programs through Community Care Haliburton saw a 6% increase in 2010<sup>51</sup>, which indicates a higher level of need in the senior population.

Healthy options including affordable, fresh food were a major priority when identifying improvements to food banks.<sup>52</sup> Programs to increase this access and the ability to create meals were identified as ways to continue to improve (i.e. community gardens, community kitchens). Initiatives within our communities and outside continue to create best practices.<sup>53, 54, 55</sup> Several initiatives out of the United States are tackling these same concerns. Although both of our communities are already active in this area, creative ideas like Green Carts in New York<sup>56</sup> and the Healthy Corner Store<sup>57</sup> initiative may be adapted for more rural areas like CKL and Haliburton.

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<sup>46</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization 1996 as cited in McQuaig, 2012.

<sup>47</sup> SDOH for Haliburton County, 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Targeted Survey.

<sup>49</sup> Minden Food Bank Statistics.

<sup>50</sup> Mary-Lou Mills, Personal Communication.

<sup>51</sup> Rosie Kadwell, Personal Communication.

<sup>52</sup> Community Consultation.

<sup>53</sup> Link to: [www.foodshare.net](http://www.foodshare.net).

<sup>54</sup> Lowett, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> McQuaig, 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Link to: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp\\_pan\\_green\\_carts.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp_pan_green_carts.shtml).

<sup>57</sup> Link to: <http://www.healthycornerstores.org/>.

Immediate relief for food security translates into the continuation and improvement of food bank services and programs like the Good Food Box and Meals on Wheels.<sup>58, 59</sup> The continued development of community gardens, with consideration for transportation challenges, was supported by 77% of the respondents.

Capacity-building solutions identified through the community consultation were primarily suggested by service providers. Community kitchens, backyard gardening, and school-based programs rated highest for programs that could improve our local situation. At the recent regional local food business retention and expansion presentation, which included CKL, several opportunities for the expansion of local food were reviewed from a business perspective. They identify the need for additional skilled labour in the local food sector.<sup>60</sup> Clearly there is opportunity to develop our community's skills in growing and processing our own food.

On the systems change level, the People's Food Policy (2011) sets out priorities for rural and remote communities:

- Community-based knowledge exchange networks
- Infrastructure and support for research and post-secondary training
- National food/land protection system
- Flexible approaches to inspection and processing
- Food as a priority for small business development and employment training
- Regional trade networks

### Groups in Our Communities

- City of Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Office<sup>61</sup>
- CKL Family Health Team
- Community Care Haliburton County
- Community Living Kawartha Lakes
- Farmer's Market, Haliburton County
- Food For Kids - Haliburton County's Student Nutrition Program
- Foodnet:
  - Cardiff Community Food Bank,
  - Community Care Haliburton County (Meals on Wheels),
  - Fleming College,
  - Good Food Box – Haliburton and District Lion Club,
  - Haliburton 4Cs Food Bank & Lily Ann,
  - Haliburton County Community Garden Network,

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<sup>58</sup> McQuaig, 2012.

<sup>59</sup> Community Consultation.

<sup>60</sup> Regional Local Food Business Retention and Expansion, 2012.

<sup>61</sup> City of Kawartha Lakes Food Charter.

- Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team,
- Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit,
- John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton,
- JTs Food Crusade,
- Minden Food Bank,
- Ontario Early Years Centres,
- Point In Time Centre for Children Youth and Parents,
- SIRCH Community Services & Consulting (community kitchens, farm tours/food workshops, free food supplements to pregnant/breastfeeding women),
- Social Services Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton County,
- Wilberforce Word of Life Food Bank.
- Harvest Haliburton
- HKPR District Health Unit<sup>62</sup>
- Individual Farmers
- Kawartha Conservation
- Kawartha Field Naturalists
- Kawartha Haliburton Children's Aid Society
- Kawartha Lakes Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Kawartha Lakes Food Source:
  - Adult & Alternative Education Centre,
  - Adult Protective Services,
  - Canadian Mental Health Association,
  - Central Food Cupboard,
  - CKL Social Services,
  - Coboconk Food Bank,
  - Dream Centre,
  - Dunsford Food Bank,
  - Fenelon Falls Salvation Army,
  - HKP District Health Unit – Food Skills programs,
  - Kawartha Lakes Reach for Recovery,
  - Little Britain/Mariposa Food Bank,
  - Omemee Food Bank,
  - Sir Sandford Fleming Food Cupboard,
  - Women's Resources,
  - Woodville Christian Foodbank.
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Toward Balance Support Network
- United Way for the City of Kawartha Lakes
- Victoria Stewardship Council

<sup>62</sup> Food For All in City of Kawartha Lakes, 2012 (HKPR Health Unit)  
[http://www.hkpr.on.ca/Portals/0/PDF%20Files%20-%20Lifestyles/Food4All\\_CKL2.pdf](http://www.hkpr.on.ca/Portals/0/PDF%20Files%20-%20Lifestyles/Food4All_CKL2.pdf).

"Get local grocery stores agree to exchange products it carries, but that aren't useful/healthy for a food bank donation (i.e. canned smoked oysters could be exchanged for soup)"  
(Targeted Survey)

"Give the poor enough money to buy their own food – food banks provide food that is expensively packaged and high in trans fat like KD – it's a waste of money that should go directly to the poor"  
(In-Depth Survey)

"There is a program in the us that allows food stamps to be redeemed at farmers markets; there should be some way to subsidize the poor's use of farmers markets, CSAs etc"  
(Targeted Survey)

"Delivery of food to those rurally who don't have vehicle access"  
(Targeted Survey)

## HOUSING

In 2010, the Conference Board of Canada estimated that 20% of Canadian households have trouble finding the money to live in their homes because of a lack of affordable housing. This lack of affordability leads individuals to make sacrifices in other areas which reduces health, productivity, competitiveness – and thereby the tax base – while increasing the costs of municipal transportation, health care, and welfare. As defined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, “Affordable housing” is housing that costs less than 30% of before-tax household income. Shelter costs include rent and any payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services, as well as mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes, and any condominium fees, along with payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services.

Housing was identified by service providers and clients as a major issue in both geographic areas. In the on-line survey, 92% of Haliburton respondents and 79% of CKL respondents indicated that there was a need for more affordable housing. In the same survey, 75% of respondents who have never experienced poverty, and 84% of respondents who are currently experiencing poverty, see the need.

Coupled with transportation concerns and responsibility being shifted to lower-tier government, the challenge of rural housing continues to grow. Regarding the availability of affordable housing, the following Service Level Standards are established in Ontario for CKL and Haliburton:

- The City must maintain a minimum of 871 Rent Geared to Income (RGI) housing units across its service area. Of these:
  - 522 must be for “High Need” households (households with incomes at or below levels set by regulation).
  - 32 must be physically modified to provide suitable housing for physically disabled persons.
- Of 941 social housing units in the service area, 264 are owned and operated by six Not-for-Profit Housing Projects (NPHPs) and 677 by the Kawartha Lakes Haliburton Housing Corporation (KLHHC). Units not used for RGI housing are rented at market rates.
- Rent Supplement Program agreements are maintained with private landlords to provide RGI housing to 128 households.<sup>63</sup>

At the end of 2011, there were 531 applicant households on the waiting list for affordable housing in CKL and Haliburton: 154 seniors, 105 families, and 272 couples/singles. Average wait times are 2-5 years.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Link to: [http://www.city.kawarthalakes.on.ca/city-hall/departments/budget-and-financial-planning/2012-budget-documents/2012\\_Adopted\\_Operating\\_Budget.pdf](http://www.city.kawarthalakes.on.ca/city-hall/departments/budget-and-financial-planning/2012-budget-documents/2012_Adopted_Operating_Budget.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Health and Social Services Activity Report - Fourth Quarter 2011.

Affordable housing is on the minds of the residents of CKL and Haliburton. As part of the Province's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, the City (as Housing Service Manager) will be completing a Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for implementation by January 1, 2014.<sup>65</sup> Haliburton County is currently working on completing a housing study to quantify the types of existing dwellings to enable planning that will address the needs of all community members.

Local research indicates that there is recognition that the cost of housing is high and more affordable units are required in both communities. In the community consultation, 25% of the respondents of Haliburton County and 17% of those from the City of Kawartha Lakes described their housing as unaffordable. Approximately 10% of respondents from both communities identified that they are living in unsafe or unhealthy housing. Subsidized housing was seen as the best option (71%), with townhouses as the second preference (43%).

Creating new housing does not paint the whole picture for our community. A total of 80% of respondents states that new windows and insulation are priorities for home improvements and that the cost of heat and hydro is an increasing concern. Immediate relief for housing can focus on immediate opportunities to improve the existing housing stock. Creating programs that increase free or price-reduced, energy-efficient materials, including caulking, weather-stripping, and window plastic would respond to many of the suggestions gathered through the community consultation. Additional assistance for home owners to receive subsidies, upon application, to perform home repairs would also help. (Examples: Neighbourhood Housing Assistance<sup>66</sup> and Community Neighborhood Housing Services<sup>67</sup>). Home repair/renovation may be a way to create opportunities for job experience as well.

Housing can be more than just a roof over your head. Housing development offers an opportunity for built-in community support. This can be facilitated by design as in Co-operative and Shared Housing models<sup>68</sup> or through partnership with service providers as in the case of assisted living arrangements. Having supports in place to offer physical care, life skills training, and/or connections with the community are an essential part of successful housing development, particularly for people experiencing poverty. Neighbourhood integration, both physically and through linking with community resources, can be a focus for housing development. Some of the largest housing corporations support multiple houses scattered across cities or regions, rather than one or two buildings with multiple units.<sup>69</sup> Consultation with landlords about the issues they face and how the community can help create successful tenancy would be a valuable voice around the table.

Systemic change for housing can happen at the local level by examining local bylaws to enable/encourage shared accommodation opportunities (in-law suites). Some areas in British Columbia<sup>70</sup> have instituted levy systems so that those who are benefitting from housing development

<sup>65</sup> Link to: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page9184.aspx>.

<sup>66</sup> Link to: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/neighbourhoods/programs/nha.html>

<sup>67</sup> Link to: <http://www.communitynhs.org/>

<sup>68</sup> Link to: <http://www.cohousing.ca/>

<sup>69</sup> Link to: <http://www.nptbdc.org/article/portfolio-128.asp>

<sup>70</sup> Link to: <http://www.whistlerhousing.ca/>

for more affluent populations are also contributing to the creation of affordable options. A complete and continuous review of the financially-assisted housing infrastructure and an assessment of required repairs and retrofitting are complex and necessary tasks.

### Groups in Our Communities

- A Place Called Home
- Aging Well Committee
- CKL Family Health Team
- Community Care Haliburton County
- Community Care Village Housing
- Community Legal Clinic
- Community Living Kawartha Lakes
- Fenelon and Area Independent Living Association
- Haliburton Community Housing Corporation
- John Howard Society of Haliburton
- John Howard Society of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton
- Kawartha Haliburton Children's Aid Society
- Kawartha Lakes – Haliburton Housing Corporation
- Kawartha Lakes Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Kawartha Lakes Mental Health Service
- Kawartha Participation Units
- Market Square Apartments – CMHA
- Monmouth Township Non-Profit Housing Corporation
- Neighbourhood Housing in Lindsay
- Places for People Haliburton County
- SIRCH Community Services
- Staanworth Non Profit Housing Corporation
- United Way for the City of Kawartha Lakes
- Village Housing – Community Care



## LIVING VS. GETTING BY

Quality of life was another theme that emerges over and over again in discussions about poverty.<sup>71</sup> As one focus group participant said, “It is about the Bread and the Roses”. These issues were consistent themes throughout the community consultation. This topic is linked closely with the next section on accessing social services with regards to the restrictions associated with being on government assistance and challenging the definition of what is a luxury (phone, internet, pets, etc.).

Addressing the issue of quality of life is complex, requiring a more holistic approach to issues to poverty. Considering quality of life requires programming to look beyond the basic needs that are not being met and consider the other elements of life. Neighbourhood improvement models are one way to address this theme. Neighborhood Houses are small, local, neighborhood houses that act as community centres. They provide various services from recreation programs, childcare, training, advocacy, etc. Prevalent in Australia, they also exist in BC and Ontario in an urban context.<sup>72</sup> In Manitoba, Neighborhoods Alive! “works with community partners to build on the strengths and experiences of communities, taking into account the distinctive needs, conditions and priorities of individual neighbourhoods.”<sup>73</sup>

Access to recreation and the overall cost of goods were highlighted in the community consultation.<sup>74</sup> Immediate relief would include increased subsidies, recreational gear swaps, and the provision of transportation and child care.<sup>75</sup> Clothing and gear exchanges, increasing re-use, and providing support for food costs through discount cards or subsidies were all suggestions.<sup>76</sup>

Incorporating child care into recreational programs and at recreation facilities would help remove some of the barriers to participation. The targeted survey provided many suggestions for types of recreation people would like to participate in. These include traditional sports like baseball and hockey, but also listed activities such as fishing, cycling, running, and skiing/snowshoeing as options. To decrease the costs of goods, survey respondents suggested encouraging re-use at landfills and coordinating additional re-use initiatives.

Systemic change in this area is connected to advocacy and also to accessing services.

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<sup>71</sup> Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, 2008; Gorman, 2007; Best Start Resource Centre, 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Link to: <http://www.anhlc.asn.au/>.

<sup>73</sup> Link to: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/neighbourhoods/index.html>.

<sup>74</sup> Link to: <http://lin.ca/access-to-recreation>.

<sup>75</sup> Community Consultation.

<sup>76</sup> In-depth Survey.

**Groups in Our Communities**

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Kawartha Lakes
- Canadian Tire Corporation - Jump Start Program
- Community Churches

## ACCESSING SERVICES

This theme, as defined by the community consultation, refers to Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP); access to health care; and the need to coordinate services.

### OW/ODSP

A significant amount of feedback primarily related to access and the adequacy of social services, particularly OW and the ODSP. In 2011, the average monthly case load for OW was 1435 in CKL and 260 in Haliburton. The family composition is outlined below:

	Singles	Sole Support	Couple (no dependents)	Couple (with dependents)
Haliburton	55.0%	27.5%	7.3%	10.2%
CKL	59.9%	28.6%	3.5%	9.0%

The 2011 average monthly caseload for ODSP for both municipalities was 2441. Based on historical data from 2006, CKL represented approximately 78% of the ODSP caseload, while Haliburton was 22%. This would equate to 1748 cases in CKL and 537 cases in Haliburton. (Health and Social Services Activity Report - Fourth Quarter 2011). The focus groups clearly identified the need to address access to services and perceptions about ODSP and OW funding levels, as a high level of dissatisfaction with the amount of subsidy and the way it is administered was evident.

## Health Care

Surprisingly, access to health care on a large scale did not emerge in the community consultation, despite the fact that poverty and health have been closely linked, and that access to health care is an issue in rural communities specifically.<sup>77</sup> The lack of access to doctors and the need to travel for health care impacts almost everyone in a rural community. The community consultation primarily identified the need for subsidies for specialized services (dental, physiotherapy). Recent local initiatives to provide subsidized dental care have been tremendously successful (Volunteer Dental Outreach for Haliburton County and Community Health Centre for City of Kawartha Lakes Dental Program. For example, since May 2011, the Volunteer Dental Outreach for Haliburton has helped over 217 patients, provided over 933 appointments and completed \$337,700.49 in free dental services).<sup>78</sup> The HKPR Health Unit and local

<sup>77</sup> SDOH for Haliburton County, 2010; HKPR, 2008.

<sup>78</sup> Link to: <http://www.seodevspace.com/dental/news.shtml>.

Family Health Teams continue to educate on the connections between poverty and health and work to decrease barriers to health like transportation.<sup>79</sup>

## Coordination of Services

Local service providers are prepared to work together, provided the practical consideration of space and cost are addressed, and the realities of the stigma associated with accessing services is taken into consideration.<sup>80</sup> In rural communities, service coordination often happens without systemic support; however, working towards a simplified way to access services while maintaining client dignity is a priority.

Both clients and service providers commented on the difficulty in accessing information/getting information out about the programs available. This theme relates to organizations coordinating their efforts on a number of levels.

Creative coordination efforts are already happening across our region. There are examples of regional and local coordinating groups that have already formed to address gaps in services (i.e. Working Together for Kids' Mental Health, Transition Age Youth Committee, etc.). Encouraging the formation of these types of groups, continuing on-going support for local dental initiatives, and continued support for transportation supports for health care (i.e. Community Care) are serving an important need.

To facilitate better coordination of services, an on-line presence for all social services could be explored. Further research into the best way to move ahead on sharing information and on how to train/inform service providers and clients are critical to success. In addition to an on-line resource, groups should explore opportunities for shared space in the community where possible, building on the Neighborhood House concept<sup>81</sup> and creating a physical resource that can meet multiple needs.

With the Social Services Review expected to be completed in September, 2012,<sup>82</sup> there may be an advocacy role to play to address these concerns. Provincial social assistance programs need to be developed and delivered in a manner consistent with the Province's overall commitment to poverty reduction. Decisions relating to policy, rates and benefit structure should relate to the principles of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Competing priorities and fiscal restraint should not negatively impact the lives of the most vulnerable. Integration of services and programs is supported where positive outcomes result. Consolidation that is meant solely to save money will reduce services and destabilize programs and communities.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> HKPR 2008, 2011.

<sup>80</sup> Community Consultation.

<sup>81</sup> Link to: <http://www.anhlc.asn.au/>.

<sup>82</sup> Link to: <http://www.socialassistancereview.ca/>.

<sup>83</sup> Rod Sutherland, Personal Communication.

### Groups in Our Communities

- Domestic Violence Coordination Committee CKL & Haliburton
- Local and Regional Human Service and Social Justice Committees
- Roundtable for Children and Youth
- Service Providers' Network (Haliburton County)
- Transition Age Youth Committee
- Volunteer Dental Outreach Haliburton
- Working Together for Kids' Mental Health (Haliburton/CKL)



## ATTITUDES AND ADVOCACY

The way people facing poverty are treated and viewed by the general public, politicians at all levels, and service providers is cause for significant concern. Service providers identified this over and over again as a barrier to accessing services. In Haliburton, 45% of respondents to the targeted survey reported experiencing negative attitudes, with 35% in CKL. Some respondents commented that they simply do not disclose their economic status for fear of stigma and stereotyping. Survey responses supported the notion that this is an issue with service providers, politicians, and the general public, pointing to the need for sensitivity training and advocacy/awareness campaigns. Resources connected to this work can be accessed through national initiatives like PovNet and the Tamarack Institute as well as at the local level through the HKPR Health Unit.

There will always be a need for advocacy. Engaging with local media outlets to initiate and maintain a media campaign and creating avenues for clients to tell their stories (i.e. videos, articles, and websites) are important methods to educate the general public.<sup>84</sup>

To further build capacity in our communities, sensitivity training for employees and volunteers was suggested throughout the community consultation.

In addition, there are several ways we can add our region's voice to Provincial and National advocacy efforts (examples are included below).

### National

- Affordable Housing (CMHC)  
(<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/> )
- Living Wage Advocacy  
(<http://www.livingwages.ca/>)
- Make Poverty History  
(<http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/>)
- PovNet: Canada Pension, Employment Insurance, Older adults  
(<http://www.povnet.org/>)
- Tamarack – Vibrant Communities  
(<http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2.php>)

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<sup>84</sup> Community Consultation.

**Provincial**

- 25 in 5 Network  
(<http://25in5.ca/>)
- Increases to Minimum Wage  
(<http://livingwageforfamilies.ca/>)
- Ontario Social Services Review
- Poverty Watch Ontario  
(<http://www.povertywatchontario.ca/>)

**Groups in Our Communities**

The need to educate about poverty is not a new concept to our region. In both CKL and Haliburton, groups have launched advocacy campaigns and are consistently in the news shedding light on local poverty issues. For example, The HKPR recently published their “ReThink Poverty” Campaign and produced a video<sup>85</sup> to highlight personal stories. Organizations like the United Way, SIRCH, and the Poverty Coalition of the City of Kawartha Lakes, are only a few of the community groups poised to continue this work as part of a larger strategy in our region.

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<sup>85</sup> Link to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2yO5iDKPCw>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

The themes identified by local residents and included in this report are not unique. They are included in poverty reduction strategies across Ontario. This said the solutions developed must be sufficiently unique to respond to poverty in our communities. Most of the geographic areas for which poverty reduction strategies have been developed in the province have been larger than the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County and highlight neighbourhood revitalization as a key component. While neighbourhoods are fewer in our rural area, there is a strong sense of community in even the smallest rural center. Informal community networks –like those of neighbourhoods– already exist. A key challenge for poverty reduction in our area is to find ways to support our diverse communities in formal, organized, and informal ways.

This report to the City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton represents an initial step in an on-going collaborative effort to bring a high profile to poverty reduction in our communities and to take concrete actions at the municipal and community level. The information collected for this report, and future consultations, will inform future action; but action has to be started now. It is our hope that this information, coupled with the energy created at the Poverty to Possibilities Forum, will set the wheels in motion for coordinated, inclusive action on poverty.

### Recommendation #1

**Establish a Community Driven Group (CDG) to oversee implementation of strategies over the long term.**

The role of this group includes evaluation, research, advocacy, and awareness. A working group should be established for each themed priority. It is important to have people who are dealing with the issues on a daily basis as part of the working group, as opposed to being represented exclusively by others (i.e. service providers or advocates). Stakeholders at the Poverty to Possibilities Forum identified the theme group that they were passionate about.

The Report of the Mayor's Taskforce on Poverty in Kingston (2007) indicates that best practices in other Canadian cities tell us that the Roundtable (i.e. Community Driven Group):

- Must be owned by the broad community and not under the control of one or two agencies.
- As a facilitator, it pursues its objectives through other agencies and organizations.
- Its life expectancy should be finite. Its general evaluation processes should contemplate a wind down or major repurposing of the initiative in the three-to five-year range in response to the changing needs of the community.
- It must have a stable base of core funding.



The CDG should focus on determining its scope of work in the short term (1-3 years). It is critical to focus efforts so that resources are not dispersed so much that they cannot be effective.

## Action Plan

<b>Recommendation #1</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <b>Establish a Community Driven Group (CDG) to oversee implementation of strategies over the long term.</b> </div> <b>Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a voice to poverty</li> <li>• All people have choice</li> <li>• Work collaboratively on solutions</li> <li>• Put ourselves out of business</li> </ul>	
Short Term (6 months-1 year)	Responsibility
The Community Driven Group (CDG) must be formed immediately so that the considerable momentum created by this strategy development is not lost. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Community Driven Group</li> <li>• Recruit more members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Steering Committee</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
City of Kawartha Lakes & County of Haliburton council representation must be maintained. These representatives should have assigned roles (co-ordination/support, and/or financial contribution).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
The CDG should clearly define its leadership for the duration of the first term (1-3 years).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Steering Committee</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Develop a process to allow access to the information collected through this community consultation for the benefit of the community. (Possible student research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Annual funding may be required for various functions of the CDG (i.e. Advocacy, etc.). The CDG needs to create a detailed budget for presentation to council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Ensure that Poverty Reduction is included in the Community Vision for City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #1**

**Establish a Community Driven Group (CDG) to oversee  
implementation of strategies over the long term.**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
- All people have choice
- Work collaboratively on solutions
- Put ourselves out of business

Short Term (6 months-1 year)	Responsibility
Consider having 2 separate groups or subcommittees that can focus on Haliburton County and CKL .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Steering Committee</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #1 (Continued)**

**Establish a Community Driven Group (CDG) to oversee  
implementation of strategies over the long term.**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
- All people have choice
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<b>Medium Term (1-3 years)</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Strive to achieve inclusiveness by year two – including, but not limited to: municipal government, businesses, social service agencies, and people with lived experiences in the CDG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> </ul>
Continue to involve all agencies working with people in poverty and people with lived experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> </ul>
Create an on-line ‘report card’ highlighting the progress at the end of each year. Report to council and media releases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> </ul>
Strike a committee with the local school board (re: use of school buses, Food for Kids, breakfast clubs, child care training, after school recreation, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Child care</li> <li>• Recreation</li> </ul>

## Recommendation #2

### Establish theme-based working groups (i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).

The CDG needs to determine which themes are priorities and establish corresponding sub-committees (theme groups) to work on those priorities. Theme groups within the community driven group (CDG) engage people based on their areas of interest, passion and expertise, but it is extremely important to maintain contact with the larger group to benefit from the birds-eye view of the overall effort to reduce poverty. Organizations and individuals interested in each theme, and those absent from the event, were identified at the Poverty to Possibilities Forum. This is a good starting point for establishing sub-committee membership.

Vibrant Communities<sup>86</sup> suggests that local talent can exist at the program and the systemic level. At the program level, for example, efforts to address food security, transportation, and income could have a combined access point. At the systemic level, various organizations and local government can all send a similar message to advocate for a \$100 healthy food supplement. This recommendation is about highlighting what is happening in our communities already and strengthening those efforts. Theme groups of the CDG could inventory local programs and specifically look for ways to avoid overlap and enhance access. In fact, these coordinating groups already exist in many areas. The actions suggested below are solutions derived from the information collected through the community consultation. They are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather a starting point for each theme group.

## Action Plan

Recommendation #2	
<div> <b>Establish theme-based working groups (i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).</b> </div>	
<b>Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a voice to poverty</li> <li>• All people have choice</li> <li>• Work collaboratively on solutions</li> <li>• Put ourselves out of business</li> </ul>	
Community Driven Group Actions	Related Groups
Determine the theme priorities (Employment, Food, Housing, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> </ul>

<sup>86</sup> Gamble, 2010.

**Recommendation #2**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
- All people have choice
- Work collaboratively on solutions
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Community Driven Group Actions	Related Groups
Contact people who self-identified their passion in the various themes at the forum, and engage them in the CDG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> </ul>
Ensure representatives of networks and groups already working in a theme area are invited to the tables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> <li>• All themes</li> </ul>
Encourage innovative collaborations and innovative partnerships that would reduce or alleviate poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> <li>• Councils</li> <li>• All themes</li> </ul>
Promote poverty reduction and investment in social infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> <li>• Councils</li> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
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<b>Advocacy Actions</b>	<b>Related Groups</b>
Create a communication strategy that will coordinate the release of information from the CDG and will advocate for public awareness of poverty in our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Determine how the CDG can collaborate with the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit in the continuation of its media campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Investigate opportunities to create a 'day in the life of' campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Engage organizations and informal groups in the development of sensitivity training for employees and volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Advocate for transportation funding to be connected to all social service programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> <li>• Transportation theme</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
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<b>Employment Actions</b>	<b>Related Groups</b>
Develop a local/regional employment group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDG</li> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>
Consult with local businesses to identify gaps in the workforce – what are their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>
Promote additional employment supports and skills development programs, with special attention to vulnerable persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>
Increase the number of employment training and apprenticeship programs in our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>
Bring more new business offering employment to our communities and support the growth of existing businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Provide more training and mentorship for new entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Create a living wage policy/philosophy for our region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Develop an employment strategy: identifying appropriate industries for year-rounds jobs, extending the season, hiring locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>
Work with Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Supports Program (ODSP) to address employment opportunities and generating income while on assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>
Work with local businesses that identified a lack of skilled labour in the recent CKL Business Retention & Expansion report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

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<b>Transportation Actions</b>	<b>Related Groups</b>
Initiate discussion with school board regarding use of school buses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation theme</li> <li>• CDG</li> </ul>
Identify the need for transportation between communities (Green Rider).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation theme</li> </ul>
Inventory County vehicles and time/type of use – look for ways to support local groups who need access to vehicles (i.e. Food Banks, recreation, child care).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation theme</li> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Provide funding for ride share web site and maintenance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Prioritize creation of AT infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils</li> </ul>
Increase transportation subsidies for those in need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation theme</li> <li>• Councils</li> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Determine how organizations with vehicles can stretch their mandates to increase use of their vehicles beyond their immediate programs. (Inventory existing organizations with vehicles and explore type of use and options to expand.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation theme</li> </ul>
Investigate the fit for our communities regarding the development of ride-sharing and car-sharing programs. Establish a ride-sharing web site and publicize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation theme</li> </ul>
Advocate for a program to provide financial support for car repair and insurance costs for rural, low-income families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation theme</li> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>



**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

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<b>Child Care Actions</b>	<b>Related Groups</b>
Explore parent-driven co-op models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care theme</li> </ul>
Support training opportunities locally (Babysitting, Early Childhood Education).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care theme</li> </ul>
Advocate for increased subsidies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care theme</li> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Advocate for changes to OW.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care theme</li> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Increase affordable, after-hours day care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care theme</li> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>
Encourage existing programs to include child care as part of their offerings, where this is not already in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care theme</li> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
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<b>Food Actions</b>	<b>Related Group</b>
Support improvements to food banks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> </ul>
Develop sensitivity training for volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> <li>• Advocacy theme</li> </ul>
Enhance community garden efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> </ul>
Identify sustainable funding for existing programs (Meals on Wheels, Good Food Box).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> </ul>
Obtain or partner on a vehicle for delivery and transport of food through the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> <li>• Transportation theme</li> </ul>
Increase the number of community kitchens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> </ul>
Review and improve school-based programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> </ul>
Establishing Backyard gardening programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> <li>• Housing theme</li> </ul>
Encourage capacity development of local food production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food theme</li> <li>• Employment theme</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
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<b>Housing Actions</b>	<b>Related Group</b>
Explore creative models for creating additional housing (shared living, community trusts, etc.).	Housing theme
Communicate the need for housing to government and support efforts to attract developers.	Housing theme Advocacy theme
Establish an affordable renovation program with donated materials and labour.	Housing theme
Continue to prioritize the creation of additional housing stock.	Councils Housing theme
Consider bylaw implications of shared living.	Councils Housing theme
Identify suitable land for housing development.	Housing theme Councils
Increase rent-geared-to-income (RGI) subsidies and the availability of affordable town home units, consistent with best practices.	Councils Housing theme
Create a municipal depot of free or price-reduced, energy-efficient materials, including caulking, weather-stripping and window plastic.	Housing theme Councils
Complete/continue/enhance review of financially-assisted housing infrastructure, completed repairs, and retrofitting where needed.	Housing theme
Develop a program for home owners to receive subsidies, upon application, to perform home repairs.	Housing theme

**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
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<b>Living vs. Getting By (LVGB)</b>	<b>Related Group</b>
Develop a local/regional recreation group. Develop local priorities for affordable recreation.	CDG LVGB theme
Establish a “sponsor a child” for recreation programs.	LVGB theme
Create a mechanism for donations of large items (furniture, appliances, etc.) in each community.	LVGB theme
Promote/enable re-use at local landfills.	Councils LVGB theme
Enhance re-use programs (swaps, existing second-hand stores).	LVGB theme Food
Support re-use events at community centres.	LVGB theme Councils

**Recommendation #2 (Continued)**

**Establish theme-based working groups  
(i.e. Employment, Housing, Food, etc.).**

**Objectives**

- Give a voice to poverty
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Accessing Services	Related Group
Create on-line directory of all services. This has been initiated on website <a href="http://poverty2possibilities.ca/">http://poverty2possibilities.ca/</a> .	CDG Councils
Host series of discussions with social service agencies about how to increase coordination.	CDG
Create training/information package for new employees about available services in the region.	CDG
Increase client participation in advocacy and needs assessment.	CDG Advocacy theme
Look for opportunities for Neighborhood houses as a strategy in rural communities.	CDG All themes

## LEGACY OF THIS PROJECT

### The Report

This report is preliminary and summarizes what was learned through the community consultations. It must become a living document going forward to continue developing and revising the poverty reduction strategy for CKL & Haliburton, reflecting the fluid nature of this issue over time.

### The Data

Over the last year, a significant community consultation process has heard the solutions that people living in poverty, and those working to help people living in poverty feel are important and viable for the CKL and Haliburton. Although a significant amount of information was collected, it is also apparent that more information exists and is being generated constantly.

Through the partnership with the U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research, channels have been established which will allow both communities to benefit from further research of this data that may be conducted by students. Student research projects can be initiated that will analyze the data beyond the scope of this project. Requests for release of this information have already been received.

The U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research will host and maintain the survey and focus group data and make it available to community groups, using their experience regarding privacy, and following the direction of the councils.

Research on the impact of poverty in our communities has been compiled and a complete bibliography has been developed and may be expanded as more information becomes available.

A web site was created for the forum which can be updated and used to disseminate information in the future. It contains a directory of agencies that participated in the forum and provided information for the directory of services that are currently available to alleviate poverty.<sup>87</sup>

Additional data is on file as a result of the Poverty to Possibilities Forum which identifies key people who are passionate about a specific theme related to poverty.

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<sup>87</sup> Link to: <http://poverty2possibilities.ca/>

## The Community Enthusiasm

Through the work of this project, the profile of poverty in our communities has already been raised. There has been considerable interest demonstrated by the media (television & print) in their coverage of previous reports to council, media releases, articles, and especially the Poverty to Possibilities Forum.

A steering committee was formed of people who share a passion regarding the need to reduce poverty. The members participated fully and contributed greatly to advancing thus far. Many of the members have expressed a desire to continue their involvement by working in the CDG.

Considerable enthusiasm and willingness to work at the community level was expressed by many participants at the Poverty to Possibilities Forum. This energy will set the wheels in motion for coordinated, inclusive action on poverty.



Working at Poverty to Possibilities Forum

## APPENDICES

The Appendices are provided in a separate document.