



***Greater Saint John Poverty Reduction Strategy:
Poverty Reduction... Moving Forward
10 Years of Reducing Poverty***

March 2013

PARTNERS WITH VIBRANT COMMUNITIES SAINT JOHN

- Anglin Drive Neighbourhood Tenants' Association
- Anglophone South School District
- Association Regionale de la Communauté francophone de Saint John
- Bank of Montreal
- Bayview Credit Union
- Belyea, Colwell & Associates
- Brenan's Select Funeral Home
- Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Carleton Community Centre
- Centennial School
- City of Saint John
- Coast Tire and Auto Service
- Common Front for Social Justice
- Community Job Support Centre
- Correctional Services of Canada
- Courtenay Bay Tenants Association
- Coverdale Centre for Women
- Crescent Valley Community Tenants' Association
- Crescent Valley Resource Centre
- Dillon Consulting
- Early Learning Centre
- Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation
- Education (Department of)
- Enterprise Saint John
- Family and Early Childhood Education
- Family Plus Life Solutions
- Family Resource Centre
- First Steps Housing Inc
- Fortis Properties
- Fundy Wellness Network
- Fusion
- Glen Falls School
- Grand Bay Westfield (Town of)
- Greater Saint John Community Foundation
- Hazen White - St. Francis School
- Healthy and Inclusive Communities (Department of)
- Horizon Health Network
- Housing Alternatives
- Human Development Council
- Imprint Consulting
- Inner City Youth Ministry
- Irving Oil Ltd
- JD Irving Ltd
- John Howard Society
- Key to Well-Being for Women
- Lorne School
- Make Poverty History
- Main Street Baptist Church
- Mariner Partners
- Members of the Legislature
- Members of Parliament
- Mental Health Recovery Centre
- New Brunswick Community College
- ONE Change

- Options Employment Outreach
- PALS (Partners Assisting Local Schools)
- Partners for Workplace Inclusion
- Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (Department of)
- Prince Charles School
- Promise Partnership
- PRUDE
- Public Health Services
- PULSE (People Unite for Lower South End)
- Quality Learning New Brunswick
- Regional Regional Development Corporation
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Saint John Association for Community Living
- Saint John Board of Trade
- Saint John Board of Police Commissioners
- Saint John Boys and Girls Club
- Saint John Community Loan Fund
- Saint John District Labour Council
- Saint John Early Childhood Development Coalition
- Saint John Energy
- Saint John Learning Exchange
- Saint John Mental Health Recovery Services
- Saint John Medical Community
- Saint John Multicultural and Newcomers Resource Centre
- Saint John Police Force
- Saint John the Baptist - King Edward School
- Saint John Sea Dogs
- Saint John Transit
- Saint John YMCA-YWCA
- Saint John Volunteer Centre
- Salvation Army
- Scotiabank
- Service Canada
- Sisters of Charity
- Social Development (Department of)
- St. Joseph's Community Health Centre
- St. Patrick's School
- Sussex Area Vibrant Communities
- Tabufile
- TD Bank
- Teen Pregnancy Committee
- The Resource Centre for Youth
- Tourism, Heritage and Culture (Department of)
- United Commercial Travellers
- United Way Serving Saint John, Kings, Charlotte Counties
- University of New Brunswick - Saint John
- Urban and Community Studies Institute, UNBSJ
- Urban Core Support Network
- Vibrant Communities Canada
- Waterloo Village Neighbourhood Association
- Westside Wellness Centre
- Westside PACT
- Women's Issues (Branch)
- XEROX Canada

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Executive Summary

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Across Canada, cities are forming collaborative roundtables with the intention of moving the needle on poverty reduction and eradication. The vision is that these communities, all provinces and the federal government will develop aligned poverty reduction strategies that will see 1 million people less poor.

Vibrant Communities Saint John has supported a coordinated approach to poverty reduction in our region since 2004. Its multi-sectoral Leadership Roundtable brings together members from the five Priority Neighbourhoods, three levels of government, the business community, and non-profit organizations. VCSJ also supports the provincial poverty reduction strategy, *Overcoming Poverty Together*, as one of twelve multi-sectoral community inclusion networks within the province.

GREATER SAINT JOHN POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Significant accomplishments have been realized within each of the four areas of VCSJ's Poverty Reduction Strategy over the past ten years, as highlighted within the following table. Please refer to each Strategy Area within the report for a detailed review of current initiatives (e.g., Learn & Go; Youth SJ; WorkLinks; and, First Steps Housing).

NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION & HOUSING	CHILDREN & YOUTH	WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION	SINGLE PARENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhoods with high numbers of individuals living in poverty have been identified as a priority. • City of Saint John commits to Neighbourhood Development Stimulation grants; • Quarter of a million Around the Block community newspapers have been delivered; • Residents engaged as leaders and participants in changing their neighbourhood; • Neighbourhoods have community plans; • Community and government services working directly in the neighbourhoods; and • Safe Harbour for Youth underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Learning Centre established as one of five demonstration sites in NB; • Early Learning part of Department of Education; • Parent and child early learning programs established in neighbourhoods; • Healthy Vision, Healthy Smiles: health, dental and vision plan for low income children ; • Children impacted through strong partnerships between community partners and schools (PALS); • PALS extended into high schools; and, • Promise Partnership connecting children and families to the UNBSJ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases to the minimum wage; • Essential skills training complements GED preparation (high school equivalency); • Increased coaching and mentoring supports; • Coordinated agency efforts respond to the hiring needs of employers; • Individuals connected to employers; • Increased supports for self-employment and social enterprises; and, • Three year extension of health card. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Steps Housing – 10 years assisting over 300 young women and children; and • Forty young women graduate from high school through First Steps

Message from our Chairperson

Through the Leadership Round Table, we bring together people concerned about the way poverty is impacting Greater Saint John. We engage with the Business Community and Community Groups; with all three levels of Government and with individuals from our Priority Neighbourhoods; and we, collectively commit to actions that will reduce poverty in our communities.

Action against poverty can take many forms. Our goal is to reduce poverty in the greater Saint John region in a long-term, sustainable way.

New Brunswick and Saint John are not alone in the challenge to sustain poverty reduction efforts. We are, however, unique in that Saint John has a truly mobilized community (business, non-profits, low income residents, and three levels of government) with a plan to reduce poverty.

The key to our success is rooted in the work of not just individuals but in all of us working together to advance the poverty reduction agenda. Through this investment of shared resources, of time, energy and commitment we demonstrate common purpose and we have had impact.

Even today we continue to collaborate in new ways to benefit our greater community. A number of partners are embarking on the development of a **Social Plan** for our community. Its purpose is to clearly identify priorities that will strengthen quality of life especially for our most vulnerable citizens. Community engagement is vital and decisions need to be based on evidence. Opportunities for input will begin in the spring with a goal of a final plan by the end of 2013. Please take advantage of upcoming opportunities to participate.

I would like to thank the many partners that make up the Leadership Round Table who have contributed to the ongoing efforts of Poverty Reduction in Greater Saint John. I would also like to extend a sincere thank you to our funding partners who's contributions far exceed those of a monetary nature. Thank you to the **Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI)** who host Vibrant Communities SJ, to the **Province's Regional Development Corporation**, the **Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation**, the **Horizon Health Network**, the **Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training Labour** and the **City of Saint John**.

This document will provide a brief overview of some of the many initiatives happening in Greater Saint John to reduce poverty within our city. It will identify some of our successes and serve as a foundational document for reflection and discussion as we confirm our direction ... moving forward.

Dr. Regena Farnsworth –
Chairperson, Leadership Round Table
Dean of the Faculty of Business
University of New Brunswick Saint John

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES SAINT JOHN

Vibrant Communities Saint John was established in 2004 to support a coordinated approach to poverty reduction in our region. Its multi-sectoral Leadership Roundtable brings together members from the five Priority Neighbourhoods, three levels of government, the business community, and non-profit organizations. VCSJ champions the development, implementation and tracking of the strategy.

1. Lead poverty reduction – developing and maintaining a regional poverty reduction plan.
2. Coordinating and connecting across sectors and among partners to implement the priorities of poverty reduction.
3. Assisting children and youth from cradle to career to succeed in school.
4. Stimulating neighbourhood revitalization through planning and partner involvement.
5. Supporting workforce participation of low-income individuals.
6. Evaluating, communicating, and celebrating progress towards targets.

CITIES REDUCING POVERTY- VIBRANT COMMUNITIES CANADA

We have a strong connection with Cities Reducing Poverty. It is the National Vibrant Communities initiative of which Saint John was one of the 6 original cities “Trail Builders” moving the poverty reduction agenda forward in Canada. Across Canada, cities are forming collaborative roundtables with the intention of moving the needle on poverty reduction and eradication. Business leaders, all levels of governments, voluntary agencies, and people living in poverty, are forming multi sector roundtables to seek solutions to poverty. The vision is that these communities, all provinces and the federal government will develop aligned poverty reduction strategies that will see 1 million people less-poor.

NEW BRUNSWICK MOVING TOGETHER

Overcoming Poverty Together, the provincial poverty reduction strategy, is stewarded through the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation or **ESIC**. The Corporation has established multi-sectoral community inclusion networks (CINs) throughout the Province; VCSJ is the Region 2 CIN covering the area from Saint John to Sussex. In 2011, the Sussex and Area Vibrant Communities was established with community leaders and assistance from VCSJ.

Overcoming Poverty Together through the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation has made it possible for a number of initiatives to receive funding that have enhanced our poverty reduction goals. Under *Children and Youth*, the partners working together with the Early Childhood Coalition have been able to identify the needs and deliver parent and child programs in three low-income neighbourhoods, Glen Falls, Waterloo Village and Old North End. Under *Neighbourhood Revitalization and Housing*, the Urban Core Support Network delivered Learn and Go, involving 27 residents leading needed changes in their neighbourhoods such as replacing lights, adding crosswalks, installing ashtrays on poles, anti-bullying program and improving playgrounds. And under *Workforce Participation*, continuing support for strengthening transit has contributed to improved service and accessibility for individuals and families.

GREATER SAINT JOHN POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

The following briefly describes the four areas of the Poverty Reduction Strategy: Neighbourhood Revitalization and Housing; Children and Youth, Workforce Participation and Single Parents. Changes over the past ten years have been identified together with current initiatives.

1. NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION AND HOUSING

Changes:

- Neighbourhoods with high numbers of individuals living in poverty identified as a priority for our community;
- City of Saint John commits to Neighbourhood Development Stimulation grants;
- Quarter of a million **Around the Block** community newspapers have been delivered;
- Residents engaged as leaders and participants in changing their neighbourhood;
- Neighbourhoods have community plans;
- Community and government services working directly in the neighbourhoods
- Safe Harbour for Youth underway



The GOAL of the Saint John Poverty Reduction Strategy is to **reduce Saint John's poverty rate to the national average (15%) by 2015.**

More than half of Saint John's poor are concentrated in five neighborhoods – *Poverty and Plenty II*

Neighbourhood Plans

Our low income or priority neighbourhoods – (South End, Lower West Side, Old North End, Crescent Valley and Waterloo Village) - have experienced a great many changes over the last number of years. Residents are engaged and working together with schools, university, government, community agencies, community police and business partners. Neighbourhood Associations¹ are in place with access to resources, thanks to the City of Saint John and other partners. Tenant Associations exist in a number of neighbourhoods (thanks to support from the Provincial Department of Social Development) and all work closely with Neighbourhood Associations². Smaller neighbourhood groups are also growing in response to this momentum as illustrated in Anglin Drive. While we have more work to do, all of these partnerships contribute to safer, more accessible places to live.

Most neighbourhoods have community plans that were developed together with community partners. The plans have led to many changes in the neighbourhoods, including Spring Clean Ups, traffic changes, enhanced safety and more programming for children and youth. The plans have also encouraged neighbourhoods to take on new initiatives such as ONE Change (Old North End) assuming responsibility for a soon to be open renovated community centre or another example, with Crescent Valley and their Caring for the Environment Recycling program.

A number of health services offered by Public Health, Community Health Centre and VON are now delivered within neighbourhoods. The Wellness Centre at Carleton Community Centre, Crescent Valley Resource Centre, PULSE in the South End, Hope Centre in East Saint John and in the Old North End are all contributing to healthier neighbourhoods.

VCSJ staff work closely with different neighbourhood associations offering planning, engagement and other supports. A number of initiatives in the Greater Saint John Poverty Reduction Strategy involve all neighbourhoods whether it is the promotion of the Canada Learning Bond; establishment of early learning parent and child programs, or addressing transportation concerns.

Learn & Go: Working for Change

Learn & Go was created in 2008 to help low income participants develop and/or enhance civic engagement and leadership skills. The program has three parts: a series of skill building workshops; working in small groups, with a mentor from Irving Oil, on a project needed in their neighbourhood; and pitching their project idea to potential partners. Learn & Go strengthens and builds skills of residents and helps to revitalize our neighbourhoods.

Learn & Go has resulted in concrete changes including new bus stops, improved playgrounds, replaced lights, fenced in Hydro towers, traffic calming measures and new crosswalks. Residents see the program as a “way to get things done” in their community, gain new skills, and for many move on to other opportunities. For two years in a row, past participants were hired to coordinate Learn & Go. Led by the Urban Core Support Network, many partners make this program a success including residents, staff from different City departments, Irving Oil, neighbourhood associations, Social Development, the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation and Vibrant Communities.

¹ PULSE, ONE Change, Crescent Valley Resource Centre, Latimer Lake, Waterloo Village, HOPE Centre, West Side PACT

² Crescent Valley Community Tenants Association, Courtenay Bay Tenants Association, Anglin Drive Tenants Association

Around the Block Community Newspaper

Around the Block is our community newspaper in Saint John that focuses on the positive and celebrates achievements in our neighbourhoods. *Around the Block* celebrated its fourth year of publication in the fall of 2012. The paper is published every two months and is delivered free of charge to neighbourhoods and numerous drop off locations such as hospitals, schools, libraries, museums, corner stores, and seniors' homes.

Around the Block celebrates stories written by the residents, both young and old, and many pictures complement the stories. The pride that is shared by all communities is front and centre in each issue. These stories connect us with each other. Community partners also contribute articles and information on their upcoming programs and events, many do so on a regular basis as it is a proven vehicle to reach a broad audience.

When the paper started VCSJ developed a committee of residents and partners including representatives from all five priority neighbourhoods, the Human Development Council, the Saint John Community Loan Fund, and the Horizon Health Network to support *Around the Block*. The committee continues to meet and other partners are invited to meetings, depending on the theme of the upcoming issue.

The support from the City of Saint John through its Neighbourhood Development Stimulation Grant has been integral to the success of *Around the Block*. It is a viable partnership as the City's support enables Vibrant Communities to produce, publish and distribute this community newspaper at no cost to the reader.

Housing Working Group

The Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI) convenes the Housing Working Group which focuses on the priorities for *Investing in safe and affordable housing and quality neighbourhoods for ALL in Saint John*. Some priorities for the Housing Working Group include:

- Develop a housing strategy for Saint John – one plan, one voice – that aligns with Plan SJ and focuses on the revitalization of priority neighbourhoods.
- Develop a program that would involve private landlords in reserving 1% of their rental units for affordable housing.
- Research and report on the implications of the expiry of Operating Agreements with CMHC.
- Balance the need for new affordable housing units with how to help tenants move towards economic self-sufficiency.
- Meet with Federal and Provincial leaders, well before the current housing agreement expires in March 2014 to ensure SJ has adequate housing investment, going forward.
- Champion the development of a Housing Investment Fund for Saint John

Housing for Youth

Safe Harbour Transitional Youth Services is currently being established to address youth homelessness in Saint John. It will provide an emergency housing program (90-180 days) as part of a youth-serving continuum in Saint John that already includes case management services and longer-term transitional housing with education supports. Safe Harbour will partner with existing organizations, such TRC, ONE Change, Mental Health Recovery Services and Youth SJ, to provide this full continuum for homeless youth.

Homelessness Steering Committee

The Greater Saint John Homelessness Steering Committee is a network of community organizations, associations and provincial and federal government departments that works towards creating, supporting, and maintaining collaborative initiatives and projects to end homelessness in Saint John. Members include representatives from various front line organizations in the community who deal with a wide range of issues (mental health, poverty, women and families, youth, addictions etc.). The Committee has played a key role in raising awareness of the issues in our city through public events and fundraising initiatives, and has aided in the creation of several community programs and organizations, such as the upcoming Safe Harbour Youth House. Ongoing projects of the committee include supporting the STAR Network, a network dedicated towards re-housing and rehabilitation for long-term shelter users, and convening working groups on youth, women and families at risk of homelessness in Saint John.

2. CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Changes:

- Early Learning Centre established as one of five demonstration sites in New Brunswick;
- Early Learning part of Department of Education;
- Parent and child early learning programs established in neighbourhoods;
- Healthy Vision, Healthy Smiles: health, dental and vision plan for low income children ;
- Children impacted through strong partnerships between community partners and schools (PALS);
- PALS extended into high schools
- Promise Partnership connecting children and families to the University

WHAT'S BEING ACCOMPLISHED? Declining Poverty



**34% children in Saint John
under 6 years of age live in
poverty – *Poverty and Plenty II***

Early Learning Centres

Around the world, researchers agree that quality early childhood development is the best way to prepare children for life success and it yields the highest return on investment. In Saint John the Early Learning Centre, located at St John the Baptist-King Edward School aims to be a 'best practice' early childhood development program. It serves the families in the South End neighbourhood and provides quality early childhood education programs, childcare services and other important supports for young parents. Government, community groups and businesses collaborate and integrate their resources to make this possible.

The ELC has been operating for 2 years and is undergoing extensive evaluation. Its progress will guide the expansion of early childhood programs in other Saint John neighbourhoods.

Parent and child programs

Supporting parent and child programs in three priority neighbourhoods is being led by the Early Childhood Development Coalition whose members have teamed up to improve learning opportunities for parents and their children 0 to 5 years. The three neighbourhoods are Old North End, Waterloo Village, and Glen Falls. With many partners including the Family Resource Centre, Early Learning Centre, Y, FACE, and the schools, these programs are helping parents develop new parenting skills and help their infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers be ready for school. This work builds on an earlier phase where the Coalition engaged over 220 families and community members in defining and developing opportunities for Saint John's youngest citizens and their families in low-income neighbourhoods.

Canada Learning Bond

A partnership of banks, schools, Service Canada and government and community groups have organized four community sessions to promote the Canada Learning Bond, which includes up to \$2,000 per child for post-secondary education from the federal government. Families earning less than \$43,561 and with children born after January 1, 2004 qualify for up to \$2,000 without contributing any money. **OUR goal for last year** was to sign up 100 children. Through the Canada Education Savings Program of HRSDC, the statistics show that for our city in one year (November 2011 to November 2012) the numbers increased from 511 to 663 beneficiaries. However in 2012, the number of eligible children is 3,728 so we have a long way to go but the progress in encouraging!

Partners Assisting Local Schools/Community Schools

Started over 11 years ago, PALS has rallied the greater Saint John community with more than 110 businesses and community organizations, over 1000 volunteers and 18 local schools. Each PALS partnership is unique, based on the needs of the children, as identified by the school. Business and community partners provide their employees the opportunity to volunteer during their work week and/or contribute financial resources to their neighbourhood PALS school. The vast majority of these partnerships take place at seven Community Schools serving our Priority Neighbourhoods. Ongoing evaluation of the program is clearly demonstrating that everyone benefits – the students, the parents, the schools, the volunteers, the participating businesses and the community.

As a result of the success of the PALS program at the K-8 level, the Anglophone South School District and PALS recognized the need for continued support at the high school level. This program is piloted at St. Malachy's Memorial High School and although in its infancy, has already provided avenues for enrichment, career development, and student engagement.

Youth Programs and Engagement

A wide range of services and programs engage youth, between the ages of 12-24 years of age, in important opportunities to develop the creativity, energy and leadership they need to grow, thrive and contribute. Services are free at the The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC's) Richmond Street location as well as in Crescent Valley and all local middle & high schools. Providing quality recreational opportunities and building positive relationships with the youth in the community have helped to progressively increase teen participation in community.

Youth Inclusion Program (YIP)

The Youth Inclusion Program (YIP) is a crime prevention initiative funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre. ONE Change is implementing YIP in the Old North End in collaboration with local and provincial partners to provide opportunities for 11-15 yr. olds to learn new skills, take part in activities with their peers, and get support with their education. Through the ONE YIP, positive role models influence young people's attitudes by creating individual growth plans, foster healthy lifestyles choices and provide a wide range of recreational & educational activities. Saint John has experienced one of the strongest results among YIP sites in attracting and retaining participants with 78 participants in the first 18 months. ONE Change is currently seeking partners to help extend the mandate of the program past spring 2014.

Youth SJ

In November, 2011, four major youth organizations partnered together to create YOUTH SJ. This collaboration developed a standards of care tool kit, that identifies the 20 best practices that are appropriate for all youth programs. The Standards of Care was developed to assist with organizational and program assessment and improvement. Youth SJ and its member agencies are committed to ensure that youth are provided with safe, high quality programs and services regardless of the youth agency or youth group they are involved with. YOUTH SJ will invite other non-profit youth serving agencies to become members of YOUTH SJ and adopt the standards of care for their organization. YOUTH SJ will increase the public profile of the importance of standards, reaching out to public, funders and everyone who works with youth.

Access to Post-Secondary Education

In 2012, VCSJ and BCAP co-released a report that examined the **Cost of a Post-Secondary Education for Low-Income Students in Saint John**. The research indicated that most low income students could not afford post-secondary education without a student loan. For students who lived independently, the student loan was often not sufficient to cover post-secondary and living costs and this affected a student's ability to complete their studies. It also showed that the high debt load resulting from a student loan was a significant burden that could jeopardize the economic well-being of low income individuals far into their future. Single parents were especially vulnerable and singles who lived independently. This report concluded that the ability of most low-income students to pursue and complete post-secondary studies is questionable without significant financial contributions of grants and/or bursaries.

3. WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Changes:

- Increases to the minimum wage;
- Essential skills training complements GED preparation (high school equivalency);
- Increased coaching and mentoring supports;
- Coordinated agency efforts respond to the hiring needs of employers;
- Individuals connected to employers;
- Increased supports for self-employment and social enterprises;
- Three year extension of health card ;

Multiple Pathways and Supports

Learning from other communities and from our own experiences, our community, government and business partners help to guide and provide the kind of supports needed to ensure people are ready for work and that there are opportunities to connect to the workforce.

Depending on their abilities and needs, individuals may benefit from access to literacy, GED and essential skills training, entrepreneurship training, coaching and follow-up supports, and connections to appropriate apprenticeships, post-secondary institutions and employment opportunities. A continuum of supports and a coordination of services are integral to helping people find work and are provided by organizations serving different client groups³. Different pathways can lead to employment, especially if the barriers are removed.

Saint John Learning Exchange

The Saint John Learning Exchange has implemented different kinds of skills based training programs (including essential and soft skills), having recognized the need for alternative paths in addition to GED upgrading. Different approaches connect individuals to employers. A three year TIES 2 Work pilot program matched employers with individuals trained in essential skills, specific to different jobs. A job developer (initially an employment counsellor from Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour) was crucial in meeting with employers and connecting to individuals looking for work. Building on this program, the Learning Exchange initiated **WorkLinks** in 2012 where in addition to a Job Developer (on site) , job coaches were added to assist individuals in removing barriers to work, identifying interests and opportunities and to provide followup support in maintaining employment. Most recently the Learning Exchange started Voila, a cleaning company with a social purpose! It provides employment for learners and eventually income for the organization.

Making Connections

Together with community partners organized other initiatives to connect individuals to programs and services, and to employers. The “Makin it Work brochure” listed all education and employment services; Around the Block features “**spotlight**”, someone with a successful story related to school or employment . A **Job Bus** took individuals to different employers. For three years, **Catch the Wave to Employment** workshops were held for individuals looking for work that a) helped to identify their assets, b) meet employers to hear about opportunities; and c) learn about community and government resources. The turnout was always high and enthusiastic although the number of participants far outweighed the number of employers.

³ POWER UP, Learning Exchange, Community Loan Fund, John Howard Society, Options Outreach, Association for Community Living, SJ Multicultural and Newcomers Resource Centre, Key to Well-Being, Partners for Workplace Inclusion, PRUDE, Mental Health Recovery Services.

Self-Employment

The Saint John Community Loan Fund has been building its expertise in using training and investments to help individuals create income, build assets, and attain greater self-reliance. More recently it has started to help non-profits in their efforts to develop social enterprises that both employ their participants and contribute to the sustainability of the organization.

Transportation

VCSJ worked with Saint John Transit and other community partners to better understand the challenges facing residents in transportation for work or to access services. With support from Saint John Common Council, additional dollars has made it possible for Saint John Transit to extend their hours and routes, making it easier for individuals working, particularly in the retail sector. Policies were changed related to extending the length of time to use a transfer and increasing the number of children under age of five (up to three) that can travel for free and length of time for a transfer. Currently we are working with employers and community groups to encourage bulk-buying of transit passes which would reduce cost of transit.

Provincial Policy Changes

As part of the *Overcoming Poverty Together*, a proposal has been presented to the Provincial Cabinet recommending policy changes as part of the commitment to social assistance reform. A second area is a proposed drug prescription plan for employees with no health coverage which is also currently before the Provincial Cabinet. A number of individuals from Saint John representing neighbourhoods, community agencies and employers were involved in developing these specific recommendations.

Living Wage and Working Poor

Through our connections with Cities Reducing Poverty, the Human Development Council and VCSJ are focusing on developing a framework for Living Wage. Living wage is the hourly wage of what earners in a family need, based on the actual costs of living in a specific community, that provides a basic level of economic security to take someone out of poverty if they are working full-time. In addition, both organizations are participating in research to understand the Working Poor - who are they, where do they work and what are the trends.

Employer Engagement

Connecting employers and individuals looking for work is not easy, especially in this economic environment. Saint John Work Solutions is a new initiative involving eleven community and government employment services and Enterprise Saint John. Its purpose is to provide for a coordinated approach to recruiting employers with entry level and semi-skilled hiring needs. Enterprise Saint John is the link between employers and employment-related agencies with individuals ready for work. This effort began with a labour force survey last fall with sixty plus employers and will include employer engagement activities.

4. SINGLE PARENTS

In discussions with the Leadership Round Table, it has been determined that there may be a need to broaden this category. Consideration of the following options will be discussed in small groups. Single Parents continues to be a high priority area, however it may exist within the broader category of 1. Families or 2. Economically Disadvantaged Adults. The expansion of this category would take into

consideration the ways that poverty impacts other disadvantaged adults including: Single Parents, Senior Citizens, Persons with Disabilities, and New Canadians.

Changes:

- First Steps Housing – 10 years assisting over 300 young women and children
- Forty young women graduate from high school through First Steps

Greater Saint John Teen Pregnancy Committee

The GSJTPC is a group of community people who are interested in creating awareness around teen pregnancy and accompanying issues. Each year the focus of the group may change due to what the community is identifying as the pressing issues at the time. The Committee's last project was a Campaign called Babies no Returns that was made possible through the Greater Saint John Community Foundation. Overall the campaign achieved the goals that were set out in the plan: engaging youth and increasing awareness amongst our target audience and other stakeholder groups. At this time we are moving forward looking at supports for young families, access to contraception, community supports for youth plan and healthy sexuality education.

First Steps Housing

Since 2002 First Steps has offered programs and services to young pregnant women and their children who have no safe place to live. This year marks our 10th year of services that include first (12 bed 9 crib residence) and second stage (Apartments) housing; school; daycare; outreach; child development and mentoring. At this critical stage in its development, moving into the second decade, First Steps has begun a two year Social Return on Investment (SROI) Evaluation, thanks to support from the Federal Government. This 2 year process will help First Steps and its supporters understand what they do, show the value of they do (both financially and socially), and how to communicate this to the community.

This project will be a learning lab for interested social development organizations and funders. Many groups are working on improving their evaluation tools to measure program outcomes and have expressed interest in: learning the SROI methodology, assessing the value of SROI evaluation to furthering quality social development in New Brunswick, and helping to develop SROI evaluation in NB.

LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE

Bill Bastarache, Common Front for Social Justice/John Howard Society
Fern Bennett, Make Poverty History
Shilo Boucher, YMCA-YWCA
Sarah Brown, Fusion - KPMG
Dan Cameron, Social Development
*Monica Chaperlin, Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative
Michel Coté, ARCF
Debbie Cooper, Saint John Boys and Girls Club
Mel Norton, Mayor, City of Saint John
*Elaine Daley, Belyea, Colvwell and Associates
Francine DiMambro, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Roma De Robertis/Mary Beth McCurdy, Sisters of Charity
*Regena Farnsworth, (Chair) UNB Saint John
Elizabeth Flemming, MLA Trevor Holder's Office
Debbie Godlewski, Public Health Services, Horizon Health Network
Randy Hatfield, Human Development Council
Gregor Hope, Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative
Carl Killen, MLA SJ Harbour Southern Caucus
Lyn King, Community Representative
Mary LeSage, People Unite Lower South End
Grace Losier, Mayor, Grand Bay Westfield
Wendy MacDermott, Greater Saint John Area United Way
Brian Marks, Social Development
Sandra McCready, Irving Oil Ltd.
Bonnie McGraw, St. Joseph's Community Health Centre
Donna McKee, Waterloo Village Association
Sara Mudge, Saint John Board of Trade
*Brenda Murphy, Urban Core Support Network
Faith Nagle, MP Rodney Weston's Office
Clare Northcott, Greater Saint John Community Foundation
Mary Eileen O'Brien, SJ Board of Police Commissioners,
Carleton Law Group
Phil Ouellette, City of Saint John
Donna Reardon, Common Council, City of Saint John
Shirley Robinson, Resident, Old North End
Nancy Savoie, Crescent Valley Neighbourhood
Janet Scott, Enterprise Saint John
Zoë Watson, Anglophone South School District
***Members of the Coordinating Committee**

Staff: Barry Galloway
Juanita Black
Penni Eisenhauer
Cathy Wright
Erin Crosby