



Newsletter

www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org

20th Anniversary

2009 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries. Many plans are underway to provide opportunities for everyone to join in this momentous occasion. One such activity is the re-launch of our logo. Originally launched in 1999, the logo is a visual representation of our vision for creating positive change in our community.

The lines and dots are seen as arms and heads, representing people. People are the foundation of our work and existence. The arms reaching out to each other which represents community participation and partnerships, working with one another and building. The heads are thought to be talking to one another giving multiple perspectives from many different backgrounds.

The logo is also in the shape of a triangle which has several different meanings. First, it has three sides symbolizing the three pillars of our mission: research and analysis, planning, and facilitation which in turn leads to education and action. The triangle is also the scientific symbol delta which means “change”. In our work we are tracking change and responding to change in an educated, responsible and dynamic way by gathering input from people and disseminating it to people. We are indeed a catalyst for change. Finally, the logo is an equilateral triangle, and so identifies our commitment to equality.

It also symbolizes a turbine in constant motion and generating power. We incorporate people in the ongoing cycle of research, planning and action that infuses the community with a new energy and a strong voice.

Finally, in the field of engineering, the triangle is considered to be one of the strongest most stable supporting structures used to build bridges. The Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries is committed to building and strengthening our community.

As you can see, the SPC-CND logo is a vibrant depiction of our vision, mission and values. The meaning behind our logo is the foundation upon which we do everything. It will continue to inspire and direct us as we continue on our collective journey.

Please join us in our 20th Anniversary celebrations. More updates and invitations to follow.

We actively and impartially participate in building and strengthening our communities through social change, innovation, re-search, analysis and facilitation

Board of Directors

Lynda Kohler—President
 Stephen Gross—Vice President
 Rosemary Dal Bello—Secretary
 Steve Silveira—Treasurer
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 Margaret Green
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Staff & Volunteers

Linda Terry—Executive Director
 Dina Etmanskie—Social Planner
 Kelly Breuls—Communications
 Reva Devendran—Manager,
 Information CND
 Amber Robertson—Social Planner
 Charis Zhou—Student Intern
 David Palmer—Student Intern
 Shannon Balla—Student Intern
 Trish Benoit—Student Intern
 Saadiya —Volunteer,
 Information CND
 Trish —Volunteer,
 Information CND

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Building Community Capacity in Rural Waterloo Region

Building Community Capacity in Rural Waterloo Region is a program sponsored by the SPC-CND with funding from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation. Its purpose is to increase the capacity of Waterloo Region's rural residents to address issues that affect their health and well-being. As part of this initiative mini-grant opportunities were made available in each of the four townships. Proposals were invited and reviewed, and in the end twenty-two creative and diverse projects were funded, ranging in focus from child development to arts & culture to neighbourhood improvement to health & wellness to economic development. These projects provided an excellent opportunity for participants to hone their skills in visioning, project planning, budgeting, communication, networking, public speaking and group management. Much practical knowledge was conveyed in the areas of physical health, food preparation and nutrition, local foods and food buying practices, mental health and drug awareness. A summary of this program will be online shortly.

Additional funds will be available in 2009 for rural capacity-building projects. Watch our website for details.



LYLE S. HALLMAN
FOUNDATION

As Cambridge Residents Your Views are Valuable



What do you like best about your neighbourhood? What needs to improve? What are the most pressing challenges and priorities? We invite you to take part in a survey being conducted by the SPC-CND. The information will be included in the Social Planning Council's *Cambridge Neighbourhood Profiles* report which will examine data and emerging trends at the neighbourhood level to inform local neighbourhood group planning. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes of your time and is available on our website at www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org.

Information Cambridge and North Dumfries

Information CND has been actively reviewing and reformatting data for the online publication of the whitebook. The 2009 edition will provide a complete and concise listing of community services and resources.

A list of free tax clinics contacts is located on our website at www.informationcnd.org

Access Waterloo Region has invited Information CND to have a information booth at their event on April 7, 2009 at St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School, Kitchener. Please join us to learn more about Information CND.

SPC-CND Response to Federal Budget

On January 28th, 2009, the Federal Government released its 2009 Budget. The SPC-CND has undertaken a brief analysis of the budget provisions with an eye to evaluating their potential impact on poverty reduction. We were particularly interested in evaluating the level of investment in social infrastructure and public programs, measures that both stimulate the economy and mitigate the risks of poverty for many otherwise vulnerable groups. While the Federal Budget contained some measures that will benefit low-income individuals and families, it is an inadequate response to the growing needs facing our communities.

(Source: Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries Communique, January 2009)

For more information on this analysis, please visit <http://www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org/pdfs/>

Information on Federal Government 2009 Budget can be found at <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2009/pdf/budget-planbugetaire-eng.pdf>

Survey

Sustainability in the Non-profit sector

Last year, several local agencies participated in a SPC-CND survey exploring the financial strains facing community agencies. Preliminary findings suggest that while many agencies are facing considerable strains and challenges to their sustainability, others have actually seen their funding increase in recent years resulting in an expansion of program delivery. What appears to be a constant for all of these agencies, however, is the serious challenge of securing long-term, stable funding. These findings are consistent with the growing body of literature and experience provincially and nationally.

Highlights from SPC-CND survey:

- Over 67% of respondents reported an increase in demand for services
- 75% reported currently

experiencing financial challenges

- Over 90% reported feeling pressure to find more revenues/resources than they currently receive.
- 50% of the agencies reported having had to cancel programs due to financial instability.

One key area of concern for agencies was the impact of funder requirements on their capacity to deliver services. Over 67% experienced a lack of flexibility in funder guidelines that negatively affected program delivery and over 50% felt that meeting funder timelines was challenging. While almost all respondents reported that funders expect or encourage evaluation of the programs they fund, very few provide agencies with additional funds to undertake these evaluations. Consequently, 75% of the agencies we heard from spent less than 15% of resources on evaluation despite the increasing funder expectations for grants.

All respondents reported increased

fundraising activities, almost 67% were involved in public relations and education, and half were developing new partnerships – all of these initiatives were aimed at ensuring financial stability in the face of reduced funding through traditional sources.

While caution must be applied when drawing conclusions from these results, given the small sample size, these findings do provide a glimpse into the experience of non-profit agencies in our community and present a whole new set of questions to explore.

The SPC-CND will be circulating an online survey in March 2009 to all human service agencies in our community to have a clearer picture of the impact of current funding frameworks on agencies and the ways in which they are responding. Please consider participating in this very important work so that we can ensure that our community's experience is represented in the larger dialogue occurring provincially and nationally.

New Faces

David Palmer has joined the Social Planning Council as a placement student. David is enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at Wilfrid Laurier University in the Community, Planning, Policy, and Organizing stream. David has a research background in psychology and biostatistics, and has worked with community agencies in the fields of child welfare, social housing, and youth mentoring.

Shannon Balla is in her first year of the Master of Social Work program at Wilfrid Laurier University. She has worked in the non-profit sector for several years primarily in the areas of women's health and child and youth services. Her previous

academic studies focused on gender and policy analysis, with an emphasis on the differential impact of social policies on various groups in Canadian society.

Trish Benoit is a first year Bachelor of Social Work Student with the University of Waterloo. Although a majority of her 6 year career in social work has had a clinical focus, she is very excited to be expanding her skills into the social policy realm. Trish currently works in the field of adolescent addictions full-time in the Waterloo Region, and attends school part-time. She is particularly passionate about the adolescent population, and how the stigma of adolescence affects the funding of social supports for youth within their communities.

Board Members Wanted

The SPC is currently seeking new board members to provide direction and guidance towards the work of the council in an effort to promote social change in this community. The council is currently seeking representation from the following groups: the legal profession, multicultural and older adults. The time commitment is approximately 2 to 3 hours per month to attend the monthly board meetings, and some additional participation is occasionally required for extra meetings or special SPC-CND functions.

If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please contact Linda Terry by phone at (519) 623-1713 ext. 235 or email linda@socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org

Federal & Provincial News



25 in 5 Network releases roadmap for poverty reduction

On February 12th, the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction released its *Blueprint for Economic Stimulus and Poverty Reduction in Ontario*. The report is the result of broad community consultations and provides a concrete plan to dramatically reduce poverty over the next three years – by up to 15% of all poor Ontarians and 19% of the 62,000 children currently living in poverty in the province. It has the added benefit of stimulating the faltering economy through targeted investments in social infrastructure and public programs. The blueprint recommendations include:

- A \$100 Healthy Food Supplement to help all adults on social assistance access healthier food;
- A Housing Benefit to help low-income renters meet the rising cost of housing;
- An increase to the Ontario Child Benefit to \$92 a month in 2009 budget and \$125 a month in 2010 budget to protect Ontarians during the economic downturn;
- Building 7,500 new affordable child care spaces, crucial to supporting parents who need to work and retrain for the demands of a changing economy;
- Leveraging federal infrastructure dollars to build more affordable housing.

To see the 25 in 5 Network press release: <http://www.25in5.ca/Blueprint.html>

For a copy of the Blueprint, go to: <http://www.25in5.ca/blueprint.pdf>

Social Benefits and Economic Costs of Taxation

Would you be willing to pay a higher amount each year in taxes if you were confident it would contribute to the elimination of poverty and to greater social

security for all Canadians? That's the question for the new poll on the web site (www.cwp-csp.ca then go to "Take Our Poll").

Many official polls show that a strong majority of Canadians want to see government action on poverty, but at the same time suggest a strong majority of Canadians seem to support tax cuts in government budgets. These two desires are likely irreconcilable. Tax cuts by definition reduce government revenue. Social security by definition requires public investment. The challenge, then, is to ensure fair and sufficient taxation that properly supports social security and other public investment ends. The purpose of this poll is to gather information about residents' perceptions.

For more information, visit <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/Reports/2006/12/ReportsStudies1507/>

In late 2006 the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives published a fascinating study by taxation experts Neil Brooks and Thaddeus Hwong. In The Social Benefits and Economic Costs of Taxation, Brooks and Hwong compared the higher-tax Nordic countries to the lower-tax Anglo countries. They found that the higher tax countries had stronger social and economic performance with respect to a wide range of indicators. As Thaddeus Hwong noted, "not only do government social programs create a healthier society, they also create the conditions for a vibrant—and competitive—economy."

(Source: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives)

Recession Relief Fund

Some federal funding programs are set to expire March 31, 2009. The Federal Government is being called on to immediately create a Recession Relief Fund which will include:

- Preventing spending cuts to public and private not for profit agencies serving vulnerable people including children, youth, families, immigrants, those who are homeless,

un/under-employed, senior citizens, people who are disabled and those suffering from mental illness. Some funding programs are set to expire March 31, 2009.

- Increasing funding to all HRSDC (Human Resources and Social Development Canada) and settlement programs including doubling the existing level of funding being provided through the HPI (Homeless Partnerships Initiatives) program to supplement funding that is projected to be lost from private sector sources and increase funding levels as required.
- In addition, the Federal Government is being call to invest portion of proposed infrastructure spending on social infrastructure by implementing a fully funded National Housing Program.

(Source: Social Planning Council of Toronto)

To learn more about or endorse the Recession Relief Fund Declaration simply follow this link: www.socialplanningtoronto.org/recession_relief_fund.html

Support Fairness for Temp Workers: Bill 139 Action Alert

The Workers' Action Centre and its members have been fighting for years for fairness for temp agency workers. In December 2008 the government introduced Bill 139 to protect temp agency workers. Bill 139 is an important first step in protecting temp workers. There are still a number of problems, but they can be fixed as Bill 139 goes through the legislative process.

(Source: Workers Action Centre)

Contact Workers' Action Centre for more information at (416) 531-0778, info@workersactioncentre.org or visit www.workersactioncentre.org.

Non-profits at risk due to economic downturn

Between 10,000 and 12,000 non-profits will 'go under' based on the economic downturn, according to Rick Blickstead, Executive Director of the Wellesley Institute. Shrinking funds from granting agencies and reduced charitable donations both individual and corporate will result in serious financial strain for many non-profit agencies. Organizations willing to build partnerships and stay true to organizational missions will improve their chances of organizational survival, Blickstead argues. Local causes are also more likely to benefit from continued charitable giving as people will focus on those issues that personally affect them. (Source: Joanne Laucius, The Ottawa Citizen, February 2, 2009)

For the full story go to: www.ottawacitizen.com/Life/Down-turn+will+sink+profits+think+tank/1242911/story.html

Community Roles in Policy

There has been growing interest in recent years in place-based interventions and their unique contribution to tackling complex issues, such as poverty. While communities are pursuing a range of direct interventions, they are recognizing increasingly that the problems faced by individuals and households living with low income result not from their own weaknesses but rather from problems and barriers in the broader economic and social system. This paper discusses the following activities in which communities can engage with respect to policy:

- Monitoring policy developments
- Building an evidence base
- Enabling access to existing benefits
- Monitoring policy

- Improving programs and services
- Creating new programs or services
- Reducing basic costs
- Designing appropriate environments
- Creating contextual change
- Reducing barriers and disincentives
- Assessing policy impact

(Source: Sherri Torjman, January 2009, Caledon Institute of Social Policy)

The full article can be found at <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/T38ENG.pdf>

Local News

A feasibility study on a Centre for Community Innovation and Design

Consider the possibilities and potential of:

- A co-location facility for entrepreneurs, artists, community groups, businesses and small organizations committed to sustainable, inclusive, vital communities in Waterloo Region.
- A community design centre with in-house resources, staff and support;
- A centre that includes offices as well as exhibit, meeting and studio space.

The Civics Research Cooperative has received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a one year feasibility study of the possibilities listed above. They plan on bringing people together to share ideas on healthy workplaces and on how best to nurture and inspire creativity, innovation and collaboration. (Source: The Civics Research Cooperative)

For more information email beth@civics.ca, or call 519.570.9521, suggest a meeting and/or visit <http://civics.ca/ccid/participate>

Multi-faith Bus Tour

On April 25th, 2009, members of the Multi-faith Initiative supported by the YMCA, Culture Link, and SPC-CND will participate in a bus tour throughout the Cambridge community visiting various multi-faith organizations. The purpose of the event is to create a higher level of awareness, and discuss "what's next?" in the continuing attempt to form a bridge between the various faith organizations and the community.

Cambridge Affordable Housing Forum

May 13, 2009

8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Toyota Room, Cambridge Centre for the Arts
60 Dickson St. Cambridge, Ontario

The Cambridge Affordable Housing Forum is being co-hosted by the Affordable Housing Sub Committee of the Cambridge Poverty Reduction Roundtable, the City of Cambridge, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The event will outline affordable housing initiatives in the Cambridge area and the regional housing strategy, and will feature a presentation from an award-winning affordable housing project from Victoria, British Columbia. The event will also include a panel of regional experts on housing and housing-related issues. Opportunities to network and lunch will be provided. Community members are invited to register for this free event by contacting the Social Planning Council at 519-623-1713, or emailing david@socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org.

SPC UPCOMING EVENTS

Community Forum on Temp Agencies

April 16th, 2009

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Newfoundland Club, Cambridge

The Fair Income Group is currently conducting the community-based research on temp work experiences, and is covering topics such as employee attitudes, service fees, safety, permanency of work, employee's rights and treatment, and reasons for using temp agency services. Seventeen community members have been interviewed, and further interviews are scheduled.

The Fair Income Group invites all members of the public to attend an open forum discussing temporary work and temp agencies in Cambridge. The forum will commence with a presentation of the result of our community-based research, and will then feature a panel of interest group representatives who have knowledge of temp work issues. Attendees will have the opportunity to discuss the presented research, and ask questions or provide comments to the material covered by the presenters.

SPC-CND Poverty Symposium

The Experience of New Immigrants in Cambridge and North Dumfries: Building an Inclusive Community

May 27th, 2009

9:00AM – 4:00 PM

Cambridge City Hall

Join us for this important opportunity to learn about the experiences of immigrants and refugees in Cambridge and North Dumfries and to discuss the ways in which social service agencies can respond to the needs of our increasingly diverse community.

Keynote Speaker: Neethan Shan, Executive Director, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
Workshop s will address a variety of aspects of the newcomer experience including: Housing, Mental Health, Employment, Youth Issues, as well as a workshop focusing on Building Inclusive Services.

Cost: \$25.00 (Buffet lunch included)

For reservations, please call (519) 623-1713 or email Shannon@socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org

(Registration opens April 1st, 2009.)



Social Planning Council
of Cambridge and North Dumfries



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The SPC promotes the "democratization of data" to build a healthy community with active citizens involved in multi-sector networks and accessible organizations.

The role of the SPC is to collect and analyze local trends and data, and to engage the community in dialogue and active planning leading to positive social change.

www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org

Information and Referral Services

Information Cambridge and North Dumfries is committed to providing accurate and timely information to our community members. For information on human and social services in Cambridge and North Dumfries.

www.informationcnd.org