

# Community Dispatch

An InfoFax of Community Development Halton

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## CHAIRMAN'S ROUNDTABLE ON THE NONPROFIT AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR: LAUNCH OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN – PART 4

*This Community Dispatch shares with you the highlights of the Roundtable's Community Plan to support and strengthen Halton's Non-profit and Voluntary Sector. The Plan was developed through the participation of nearly 300 Community members who attended the Roundtable's public forum on June 15, 2006. For more information on the Roundtable and its activities, please refer to Community Dispatches Vol. 10, #4, 5 and 6, or visit the Region of Halton's website at [www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable](http://www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable). I encourage all of you to attend the official launch of the Community Plan, which will be held on Wednesday, November 1, 2006 at the Burlington Convention Centre, from 9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.*

*Joey Edwardh*

### Community Forum: June 15, 2006

On June 15, 2006, nearly 300 participants filled Le Dome Banquet Hall to learn of the Roundtable's work, receive their recommendations and collaborate in the development of a Community Plan. While the audience was diverse – agency representatives, funders, volunteers, business representatives, elected officials and the broader community – their goal was common: the creation of a sustainable and vibrant non-profit and voluntary sector in Halton.

Although the sector is often characterized by its passion and impetus to make a difference, the energy and enthusiasm amongst participants exceeded even highest expectations. Undoubtedly, the atmosphere created by these individuals was only heightened by the event's keynote speaker, Mr. Ian Hill of the Changing Point, who delivered a message of creative and forward thinking as participants prepared to develop strategies in support of the Roundtable's recommendations. Ian challenged everyone to take ownership of the problem and how each individual could contribute towards the solution(s). That challenge led to this crucial follow-up session on November 1, 2006.

Although it was the Forum's participants who ultimately informed the Plan being brought forward by the Roundtable, it is equally important to acknowledge those who participated in other avenues throughout the process. This includes 168 people who took part in a series of Community Dialogues exploring the issues and opportunities of Halton's non-profit and voluntary agencies, funders, and volunteers. It also includes the many organizations who contributed to Community Development Halton's study of non-profit and voluntary sector human resources, as well as a number of funders who shared information through a funders survey. It was these sources of information that shaped the Roundtable's recommendations, which in turn provided the community with a framework for developing the strategies contained in the Plan.

### The Community Plan

As noted in *this Dispatch*, the processes used in developing the Community Plan were highly consultative and drew on community input at multiple points of engagement. In other words, it is a plan grown from the community up; it is a plan that reflects the voices, experience and perspectives of Halton's non-profit and voluntary sector. The following provides an overview of the Plan and its three key sections:

- Recommendations;
- Strategic Directions; and
- Next Steps.

To access the Community Plan, please visit [www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable](http://www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable), or contact Lori Kirkwood at 905-825-6000 extension 7058.

### Recommendations

Section one provides the Roundtable's recommendations within the context of their supporting research. As noted above, it was the recommendations of the Roundtable that provided the framework for the community strategies and Plan developed at the June 15

Forum. Recommendations have been grouped into one of three areas of review. These are:

*Area of Review 1: The Importance and Impact of the Sector to Halton's Economy & Quality of Life*

1. THAT awareness be raised and a culture of social responsibility and giving back to the community be grown in Halton.
2. THAT individuals of all ages be targeted around the importance and value of volunteerism and the opportunities to become involved in one's own community.
3. THAT the corporate sector continue and expand its role in supporting and promoting the importance and value of the non-profit and voluntary sector as a vital component of the Halton community.
4. THAT both agencies and funders be provided with supports regarding the financial resources available to them and the processes required to access them.
5. THAT local agencies and local governments collaborate to advocate to senior levels of government and other policy influencers on key issues, policy positions and community priorities.

*Area of Review 2: The Infrastructure Needed to Support the Sector*

6. THAT opportunities be created and supported, for staff and volunteers to attend a high quality leadership development program that also includes areas such as human resource management, financial oversight, strategic planning and board governance.
7. THAT locally driven strategies be developed to support agencies in building well-resourced, innovative and responsive volunteer management practices and programs that benefit both volunteers and the agency.
8. THAT all funders recognize in their funding model the absolute requirement of an adequate, stable funding base for agencies to engage, properly compensate and retain the core staff necessary to fulfill the agency's mission.
9. THAT project funding include sufficient funds to support core operations of the organization.
10. THAT funders and agencies be encouraged and provided with the necessary supports and opportunities to form natural partnerships and collaborations in order to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency.
11. That the non-profit sector and voluntary sector and those who fund it be encouraged to examine opportunities to improve organizational

effectiveness and maximize resources to meet community needs (e.g. maximizing the common use of infrastructure, services and human resources); while respecting the need for services to be accessible and reflect the needs of agencies and the populations they serve.

*Area of Review 3: The Funding System and Structure in Halton.*

12. THAT agencies and funders work together to develop a mutually acceptable approach to funding that includes common definitions, evaluation, accountability requirements and funding principles; while recognizing the diversity of agencies and services.
13. THAT a common glossary of funding definitions be developed to provide clarity and enhance communication; and that areas such as innovation and organizational capacity building be incorporated into these definitions.
14. THAT to achieve a more powerful community investment force, all funders identify opportunities to maximize funds raised and reduce the competitive environment of fundraising, including examining whether funders should amalgamate (e.g. United Ways) and/or adopt a more cohesive/consistent region wide system of priority setting and funding allocations.
15. THAT small, medium and large businesses be encouraged to continue and expand their support of the non-profit and voluntary sector through the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships.

## **Strategic Directions**

Although discussions at the Forum had been structured around specific recommendations, the conversations which took place were cross-cutting and naturally leaned themselves to the formation of five strategic directions. While each of these strategic directions has implications for how individual organizations might choose to operate, they are essentially sectoral in scope. Supporting each direction is a set of suggested strategies and actions which are described in the Plan, available at [www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable](http://www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable).

*Strategic Direction 1: Marketing, Promotion & Community Awareness*

Explicit throughout the discussions was the need for sector-wide marketing and the promotion of volunteerism and volunteering. To achieve these objectives, participants called for the development of a coordinated, community-wide marketing and

promotion effort, as well as enhancing the resources available to organizations currently engaged in this type of work.

#### *Strategic Direction 2: Networking, Collaboration & Amalgamation*

Flowing through nearly every discussion at the Forum was the need for organizations to come together in an effort to problem solve. The intensity or purpose for this coming together varied greatly, ranging from opportunities to network informally through to actively considering the amalgamation of organizations. In between these two extremes were calls for networking (to identify shared interests and/ or opportunities for joint action), information sharing, as well as *cooperation, coordination and collaboration*. Given that the latter three terms are used interchangeably in everyday language, developing a common understanding of the commitments implicit in each will be a key step to moving this direction forward.

#### *Strategic Direction 3: Restructuring of Funding*

Highlighting the Forum's conversations on funding was the overriding theme of the need for ongoing and meaningful dialogue between funded organizations and funders. Participants also demonstrated deep support for changes to the current funding regime. This included:

- Information sharing and dialogue between funders and funded;
- Addressing core funding issues;
- Creating consistency across the funding cycle;
- Moving towards stable funding;
- Greater coordination in fundraising activities amongst funders;
- Advocacy by funders for changes to the funding system and structure; and
- Coordination and collaboration amongst Halton's four United Ways, including the discussion of possible amalgamation.

#### *Strategic Direction 4: Enhanced Access to Information*

Across any number of mediums, there was strong support for enhanced access to information for the sector and its organizations. Most frequently, participants focussed on the creation of electronic tools (e.g. websites, databases) to facilitate the active, timely, and up-to-date sharing of information and resources. It was clear that participants felt these tools were critical

for addressing the issues raised by the Roundtable in its recommendations.

#### *Strategic Direction 5: A New Coordinating Body*

In order to see their proposed actions and strategies move forward, participants called for a mechanism to assume responsibility for the work in its entirety. Although there were variations in what this mechanism might look like, the need for a Coordinating Body was mentioned in relation to nearly all recommendations at one point or another. More details are provided under *Next Steps*.

#### **Next Steps**

As the work of the Roundtable moves forward, next steps have two areas of focus: immediate actions and ongoing development activities.

##### *Immediate Action Steps*

Recognizing that many of the strategies and actions contained in the Plan will require a lengthy implementation phase, the Roundtable felt it was necessary to identify immediate action steps to maintain momentum and initiate some of the changes needed to support the sector. Therefore, they have made a subsequent set of recommendations (based on strategies identified by the community) they are asking the sector to begin moving forward. Please refer to the Plan at [www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable](http://www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable).

##### *Ongoing Development Activities: A Coordinating Body for Halton*

Because the vast majority of strategies identified at the Forum were sectoral in scope, it is recognized the fifth Strategic Direction – the Formation of a Coordinating Body – will be essential to implementing the others. To give this body life, the Roundtable will be asking the community to adopt an interim model that it will propose at a follow-up forum on November 1, 2006. The proposed model would be led by a group of champions who will provide leadership to four working groups, each of which will be responsible for one of the four remaining strategic directions (the body itself being the fifth). The champion/working group identification process was initiated at the June 15, 2006 Community Forum and will be re-opened at the follow-up forum on November 1.

## Moving the Plan Forward: November 1, 2006 Launch

As noted throughout *this* Dispatch, the Plan will be formally introduced to the Community on November 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition to an overview of the Plan and its strategies, the Launch will provide information on how to participate in the Body of Champions and working groups described under *Next Steps*. This will be followed by a presentation of findings and analysis from Community Development Halton's Labour Force Study and a networking lunch.

We are also pleased to announce the return of Ian Hill of The Changing Point, who will provide an afternoon seminar, entitled "Leading the Heart of the Community in Changing Times". Ian's charisma and community passion will leave you highly motivated, inspired and ready to build a stronger, more sustainable non-profit and voluntary sector in Halton. Both the Halton Region and the Roundtable would like to thank Ian for donating his time to this important community event.

The Launch and Ian Hill seminar will take place on Wednesday, November 1, 2006, at the Burlington Convention Centre, 1120 Burloak Drive, Burlington. You are invited to attend all or part of this exciting day, which has been structured as follows.

### The Launch, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

- overview of the Community Plan, information on participating in the Body of Champions and working groups, findings from the Labour Force Study
- registration begins at 8:15 a.m., a light breakfast will be provided

### Networking Lunch, 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.

- meet with your peers and new colleagues

### Ian Hill Seminar, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

- registration begins at 12:30 p.m. (you do not need to register for the seminar if you participated in the morning session and RSVP for the entire day.)

To RSVP, please refer to the attached registration form or visit [www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable](http://www.halton.ca/VolunteerRoundtable).

Alternatively, please contact Lori Kirkwood at 905-825-6000/ 1-866-442-5866 extension 7058.

We look forward to seeing you there!



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