

# Community Dispatch

An InfoFax of Community Development Halton

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## Chairman's Roundtable on the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector: Part 1

*The previous three Community Dispatches have focused on information that contributes to a better understanding of the nonprofit and voluntary sector—what is the sector's contribution to the economy, how does the sector raise community awareness of its social and economic role and who comprises the labour force profile of the sector. Through the Community Dispatches, I have mentioned a number of activities unfolding in our community that will contribute to the future development of this sector in Halton. One important initiative is the Chairman's Roundtable on the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector. I have asked Regional staff to the Roundtable to prepare two issues of Community Dispatch—the first describing the Roundtable and its plans and a second, which will follow immediately, that shares a summary of the Roundtable's Community Dialogues on volunteers and volunteering.*

Joey Edwardh

### Background

The Roundtable grew out of a Community Symposium "*Funding Matters: A Warning and an Opportunity*" addressing the eroding infrastructure and financial challenges experienced by Halton's nonprofit and voluntary sector agencies. The symposium had been prompted by a seminal report, *Funding Matters: The Impact of Canada's New Funding Regime on Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Organizations* (Katherine Scott, 2003) which detailed the infrastructure and financial issues being experienced by the sector on a national level. As one of their key recommendations, symposium participants asked that Chairman Savoline convene a Roundtable to address the issues and challenges faced by Halton's nonprofit community agencies.

### What is the Chairman's Roundtable?

The Chairman's Roundtable on the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector was formed in June 2005 to

review the issues, challenges and opportunities of Halton's community agencies. The Roundtable is represented by a diverse cross-section of community leaders from the nonprofit and private sectors, Halton Regional Police Services, Halton District School Boards and citizens at large. The Roundtable will review and make recommendations around Halton's nonprofit and voluntary sector within three broad areas of review:

- the sector's impact on Halton's economy and quality of life;
- the components and status of agency infrastructure necessary to support the nonprofit and voluntary sector; and
- the funding system and structure that exists in Halton.

### The Approach

To fulfill a mandate of reviewing and making recommendations within their key areas of review, the Roundtable has adopted a three phased approach to their work.

#### Phase One: Preparing for Success (June/ 05 - September/ 05)

Phase one of the initiative was largely focussed on conducting background research to gain further insight into the issues facing the sector. In turn, this information has been used in the formation of the workplan and framework documents that have shaped the initiative to date.

#### Phase Two: Gathering the Facts (October/05 - April/ 06)

Currently in their fact gathering stage, the Roundtable has been holding regular meetings to address their specific areas of review. These have been supported by a range of local guest speakers

who have shared their subject-specific knowledge with the table, and will continue to do so as the initiative moves forward. To date, topics covered include: the sector's economic contribution; declining service levels and the impact on consumers; the status of volunteerism; strategies being taken to enhance the capacity of the sector's paid human resources; and, best practices for enhancing the various elements of organizational infrastructure.

While the Roundtable is regularly provided with key literature and research, there is no substitute for Halton's local voices and perspectives. With this in mind, the Roundtable has undertaken a series of Community Dialogues to engage Halton's nonprofit and voluntary sector stakeholders around their key issues and challenges. The first set of Dialogues (held in November/ December of 2005) explored the topic of volunteerism, with close to one-hundred participants sharing their thoughts, ideas and experiences on being volunteers in Halton. At present, the Roundtable is preparing to hear from Halton's community agencies and funders, who are being consulted around their respective areas of expertise and experiences in the sector. Funder sessions will be held on April 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, while agencies will be asked to attend one of eight Dialogues throughout the week of April 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to participate in one of the sessions, please contact Lori Kirkwood at 905-825-6000/ 1-866-442-5866 ext. 7058; or [lori.kirkwood@halton.ca](mailto:lori.kirkwood@halton.ca).

Rounding out the Roundtable's fact gathering activities is Community Development Halton's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Labour Force Study. The intent of the study is to develop an understanding of the human resource needs (paid and unpaid) of Halton's human service providers;

and to recognize the economic impact of the sector in its role as a major employer. The study could not be more timely given the sector's growing recognition as a significant economic force. (See Community Dispatch, Vol.10, No.1 (January 2006) for a summary of research on the sector's economic impact. Available at [www.cdhalton.ca](http://www.cdhalton.ca))

### **Phase Three: Recommendations and Roll Out**

**(May/ 06 – September/ 06)**

Upon concluding their fact gathering activities, Regional staff and Community Development Halton will aggregate their findings into a background document for wide community dissemination. This will transition the Roundtable into the third and final phase of its Workplan, which will be highlighted by the release of recommendations and an open Community Forum on June 15, 2006. The Forum will provide an opportunity for agencies, volunteers, funders, political representatives, service consumers and the broader community to collaborate and develop strategies to support the recommendations of the Roundtable.

To reserve your spot at the Forum on **June 15, 2006**, please contact Lori Kirkwood at 905-825-6000/ 1-866-442-5866 ext. 7058; or [lori.kirkwood@halton.ca](mailto:lori.kirkwood@halton.ca) by no later than June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The Forum will take place at the Halton Regional Administrative Building at 1151 Bronte Rd., Oakville, in the auditorium from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Produced by Community Development Halton  
860 Harrington Court  
Burlington, Ontario L7N 3N4  
(905) 632-1975, (905) 878-0955; Fax: (905) 632-0778;  
E-mail: [office@cdhalton.ca](mailto:office@cdhalton.ca)  
Web site: [www.cdhalton.ca](http://www.cdhalton.ca)  
[www.volunteerhalton.ca](http://www.volunteerhalton.ca)

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