



Community Foundations  
of Canada

Fondations  
communautaires  
du Canada

15  
years/ans  
1992-2007

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## COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA CELEBRATES 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

*Movement had 28 foundations in 1992, now one of Canada's largest grantmakers*

**(OTTAWA)** May 23, 2007 – In the 15 years since Community Foundations of Canada was founded, the country's community foundation movement has undergone a radical transformation, growing from a small group of foundations spread across the country, to a national movement with an international reputation and deep roots in more than 155 of Canada's urban and rural communities.

"Canada's community foundations have come of age in the 15 years since our association was founded; we started with 28 members and today we exist in every province and one territory, serving almost 90% of the population," said Monica Patten, CEO of Community Foundations of Canada (CFC). "Canadians living in our largest urban centres and our smallest rural communities have chosen community foundations as a way to support local priorities. Together we are one of the country's largest grantmakers, contributing \$137 million to communities last year."

CFC was officially established on May 25, 1992 at the association's first annual general meeting in Winnipeg. This weekend CFC's Board of Directors will gather in the Winnipeg again to celebrate the anniversary. In 1992, community foundations had collective assets of \$500 million; today they manage more than \$2.7 billion in donor funds created by individuals, groups and businesses to support programs and priorities in their communities.

"With CFC's support and leadership, our movement has grown from a group of foundations sharing information and ideas, to a national collective that embraces innovation, seeks out collaboration and is able to offer our communities, and our donors, unique expertise on local issues and opportunities," said Richard Frost, Chair of CFC's Board of Directors and CEO of The Winnipeg Foundation.

### Local Roots

One of the movement's great strengths is its ability to draw on the local relationships and experiences of Canada's vast community foundation network.

For instance, Paul Harris, a business owner and Board Member of the Red Deer and District Community Foundation, was the inspiration behind a new nation-wide environmental partnership. Harris' company is one of a handful in Canada recognized by **1% for the Planet** (1% FTP), an alliance of 500 companies from more than 20 countries that commit at least one per cent of their revenue each year to supporting environmental causes. Thanks to Harris, CFC is now a full partner in 1% FTP with community foundations promoting the concept, holding informational meetings with business leaders and working one-on-one with businesses that want to have a positive impact on the environment.

### National Reach

Over the years community foundations have worked together on increasingly high-profile national projects, beginning with **Our Millennium**, which engaged 4.6 million Canadians from 800 communities in their own personal projects to mark the millennium.

Today, the number and scope of those projects has grown to include:

- **Vital Signs®**, a national project aimed at measuring the vitality of communities on an annual basis. This year 11 community foundations will release report cards tracking and grading each community's quality of life in key areas such as the economy, health, housing, learning and the environment. The project is based on Toronto's Vita I Signs® an extremely successful indicator report developed by Toronto Community Foundation and first published in 2001.
- An environmental grantmaking program, developed with the support of **J.W. McConnell Family Foundation**, that has raised more than \$5 million in permanent environmental endowment funds and provided \$2.6 million in grants in its first few years.
- **Youth in Philanthropy**, a program that engages young people in building local endowments to provide grants to youth-related programs in their communities. The program involves more than 55 community foundations across Canada and its resources have become a model for foundations around the world.
- **Supporting Your Community**, the first national philanthropic program of its kind in Canada, launched in conjunction with BMO Financial Group. The program invites BMO clients to create a charitable fund at their local community foundation.

#### Tackling Root Causes

In 2005, the internationally renowned Ford Foundation provided CFC with a grant to support its efforts to respond to the root causes of some of our communities' most pressing problems.

The following year CFC joined forces with the Law Commission of Canada to publish **Unsettled: Legal and Policy Barriers for Newcomers to Canada**, a research study that concluded Canadian social policy is undermining the success of newcomers to this country, making it harder for immigrants to settle here, even though they are more educated and more skilled than their predecessors. The study, a research first for the community foundation movement, attracted extraordinary attention from government, stakeholders and media.

#### International Reputation

Over its 15-year history CFC has made a conscious decision to support the growth of philanthropy around the world by widely sharing its knowledge and resources. Every year visitors from all over the globe come to learn more about Canadian community foundations.

In 2000, CFC also spearheaded the creation of **WINGS-CF**, a global network of community foundation support organizations. The network helps organizations link with peers in other countries including Poland, Russia, the Philippines, Latvia, the United States, India, Mexico, South Africa, Australia and Germany.

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**Note to editors: A brief history of Canada's community foundation movement is attached.**

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