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## NEWS RELEASE

### Good neighbours, green places key to quality of life, says national survey

**OTTAWA (Oct. 14, 2009)** – Even during tough economic times, Canadians are most likely to identify good neighbours and green surroundings as key to the quality of life in their community, according to the results of a new national public-opinion survey.

The survey, which was commissioned by Community Foundations of Canada as part of its Vital Signs program and conducted by the Environics Research Group, shows:

- Almost nine in ten Canadians consider the quality of life in their community to be good, if not excellent
- Community size counts. In communities of fewer than 5,000 residents, 43 percent rate local quality of life as excellent, as compared to 32 percent of those in cities of 100,000 people or more.
- Canadians identify investing in infrastructure (e.g. public transit, roads, better health and social services) as the most important step to improving their community's quality of life.
- Canadians place the greatest confidence in the leaders of local non-profit organizations in making a positive contribution to improving their community.

“We are weathering the worst recession in nearly 20 years, but when Canadians think about what makes our communities special, we think about the people and the surroundings – whether that means parks, clean air, lakes or rivers,” said Monica Patten, President and CEO of Community Foundations of Canada, the membership association of the 165 community foundations across the country.

“The survey also shows residents of smaller communities rate their quality of life as excellent more often than those in large centres,” notes Michael Adams, founder of the Environics Research Group and head of the Environics Institute.

When asked to identify the one thing that contributes most to a positive quality of life in their community, Canadians are most apt to mention a positive physical environment, including green spaces, the presence of lakes, rivers or oceans, and good air quality (23%), while almost as many emphasize a positive social

atmosphere (e.g. good neighbors, harmony between ethnic communities). Another 16 per cent identified the rural or small-town character of their community and 14 per cent focused on the infrastructure and local services available to community members. By comparison, only one in ten (10%) identify the economy and/or job opportunities as the most important feature.

Almost nine in 10 Canadians feel positive about the quality of life in their community. More than one-third (36 per cent) describe it as “excellent,” while another half (50 per cent) consider it “good.” By comparison, 11 per cent rate their community as “only fair,” and only three per cent consider it “poor.” By province, communities are rated most positively among residents of British Columbia (47% say excellent), followed by Saskatchewan and Alberta (41% each), Ontario (34%), Atlantic Canada (33%), Manitoba (28%) and Quebec (30%).

Full findings and charts are available at [www.vitalsignscanada.ca](http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca) and a commentary on this survey by Michael Adams and Monica Patten is available on our blog at <http://www.vitalsignscanada.blogspot.com/>.

### **About Vital Signs**

*Vital Signs* is part of a growing, nation-wide initiative by Canadian community foundations to measure quality of life and take action to improve it. Local reports from 16 communities and a national Canada’s Vital Signs report can be found at [www.vitalsignscanada.ca](http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca). For ongoing updates, follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/CFCvitalsigns](http://www.twitter.com/CFCvitalsigns).

### **About Community Foundations**

Canada’s 165 community foundations are local charitable foundations that help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work, and play. They are one of the largest supporters of Canadian charities, providing \$169 million to local organizations in 2008. Visit [www.cfc-fcc.ca](http://www.cfc-fcc.ca).

*The research is based on a telephone survey conducted August 19 to 26 by the Environics Research Group with a representative sample of 2,007 Canadians (aged 18 and over). Results for this survey can be considered accurate to within plus or minus 2.5 percent (19 times out of 20).*

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