

June 23, 2008

\$1.1 million in grants announced to reduce poverty and improve neighbourhood life

Hamilton, ON - Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) today announced more than \$1.1 million in grants in its ongoing work to reduce and prevent poverty in Hamilton. The grants are focused in two areas: improving the quality of life in Hamilton's low-income neighbourhoods and broader strategies that have an impact on reducing poverty across the city.

These grants represent the first round of funding from HCF's Tackling Poverty Together II: Building Strong Communities program announced last fall. Under this initiative, \$5 million is being invested in poverty-reduction programs over the next five years. The commitment builds on \$3.4 million granted by HCF under the first phase of "TPT" which ran from 2004 to 2007.

Fourteen grants, totalling \$597,675 will address projects in six neighbourhoods: Jamesville, Keith, McQuesten, South Sherman, Wever, and an area surrounding the Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) centre on Quigley Rd. The grants are focused on "community hubs" – or collaborative efforts between many neighbourhood partners such as community agencies, businesses, public institutions such as schools and faith-based organizations, and citizens. The grants include funding for programs and services that cross all sectors and all ages, operational support, assistance to further develop the hub and small grassroots projects, spearheaded by residents in response to the needs they see in their own neighbourhoods.

"Neighbourhoods are a prime focus for the Foundation's investment through TPT II: Building Strong Communities" says Sheree Meredith, Vice-President of Grants and Community Initiatives. "Poverty in Hamilton is more concentrated in certain neighbourhoods. Our research and experience shows that investing in hubs is one of the most effective ways to address poverty."

Ms. Meredith says that the hubs in which the grants are focused, are in various stages of their development, enabling great opportunities for sharing knowledge about successful poverty reduction. "Four of the neighbourhood hubs – Jamesville, McQuesten, Keith and "Wever" (Sanford Ave. surrounding the Cathy Wever School) –would be characterized as well-developed," she says. "In McQuesten for instance, they have engaged many community partners, in multiple sites throughout the neighbourhood. Grants to this neighbourhood include those to support skills training for children, recreational development, outreach to seniors from diverse backgrounds, and to provide leadership and funds for resident-led projects.

“Two other hubs – South Sherman and CATCH – are at an earlier stage, and granting is focused on supporting their development.”

In addition to hub grants, HCF announced \$555,167 in 15 foundational grants. Foundational grants address poverty at a broader level, including programs that support more than one neighbourhood, policy and systems changes, or specific groups, such as seniors, whose issues are not neighbourhood-specific. Foundational grants announced include a program to assist people living in poverty to save towards home ownership, education or starting a small business, engaging youth in low-income neighbourhoods to lead poverty-reduction activities and a project to support waste reduction and the use of public transit and .

“The 29 grant recipients demonstrate excellent potential for sustainable impact on reducing poverty” says Ms. Meredith. “They showed well-rounded strategies to address the issue beyond children and youth, and to incorporate not only health and human services, but also the environment, arts, education and recreation as a means to improving neighbourhoods.”

Beyond the \$1.1 million in grants announced today, TPT II: Building Strong Communities includes an additional commitment by HCF of \$100,000 for each of the next five years, towards making Hamilton a prosperous city through a downtown core revitalization strategy. The first of these grants will be announced this fall. HCF will also spend an additional \$225,000 to assist with knowledge development and sharing, evaluation, leadership development and other technical support to the hubs, for a total first-year investment of \$1.3 million through this program.

Hamilton Community Foundation was founded in 1954. It receives donated funds from generous citizens, invests those funds to generate income, and makes grants from the income earned. HCF also brings people together to convene solutions to Hamilton's most pressing challenges. HCF has total assets of approximately \$120 million and since 1954 has made grants to our community totalling more than \$51 million. Last year, Hamilton Community Foundation made grants of approximately \$6.2 million to Hamilton organizations across sectors: health, social services, arts, environment, education and recreation.

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(Backgrounder with complete list of grants, attached)

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