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Vitality report

Wolfville by the numbers

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With the release of the Vital Signs Report, Dick Groot says the Wolfville Community Fund (WCF) has the facts that will guide its grant giving.

The fund's chair indicated that the report, which was released last week, and its annual update will be a key instrument.

"We are proud of our first report and feel that it will be not only essential in the grant giving by the Wolfville Community Fund, but also as a reference for many other organizations."

While the survey determined that residents feel safe and socially connected, Groot warned, "the economic inequality that has been so clearly identified in this report is well hidden from our daily lives and sufficiently disturbing that it warrants more in depth analysis and public attention."

Poverty an issue

For the 440 children under age of 14 living in Wolfville, the child poverty rate was about 25 per cent higher than the provincial rate.

Use of the Wolfville Area Food Bank rose by 40 per cent recently. It was accessed 669 times in 2008. Unemployment is high and economic growth is far below the national and provincial averages.

As Groot notes, "in essence we are an one-industry town, which relies on Acadia University for about 68 per cent of its total economic activity."

Yet many of Wolfville 3,772 permanent residents feel a sense of belonging higher than the national average. A high

degree of mobility exists with 6.9 per cent of the population living outside Nova Scotia during 2006. Tourism appears to be declining.

There are 10 official places of worship and 15 recreation and/or sport facilities. In the area of health care, 16 general practitioners see patients in the town of Wolfville. The Eastern Kings Memorial Community Health Centre was accessed over a one-year period 28,376 times.

Wolfville taxpayers donate to charitable causes at a rate slightly higher than the provincial and national average, but that rate is declining slightly compared to 2001.

Volunteer involvement is significant. Over 70 per cent of those filling out the fund's survey belong to community organizations. The volunteer rate in Nova Scotia was 55.3 per cent in 2007.

Just 7.5 per cent of the Wolfville population belong to a visible minority in 2006. This number was higher than the provincial proportion of 4.2 per cent, but lower than the national level of 16.2 per cent.

The average age of residents is 41.2. Six childcare facilities serve 150 children aged two months to 12 years.

Moving forward

Heading into the future, Groot suggests, "we must build on the knowledge resources of Acadia and maximize the opportunities offered by: green technology, localization, globalization, web technology and the attractiveness of our town. This will bring new businesses whose owners and employees want to live in this magical place with its incredible geography and cultural environ-





Dick Groot (left), Chair of the Wolfville Community Fund, said the recently released Vital Signs Report shows economic inequalities that deserve public attention. Wendy Elliott.

ment.”

The WCF, which operates under the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia, is attempting to build a permanent

financial resource for the community through an endowment fund.

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