



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Guelph Community Foundation and Toward Common Ground release 2023 Vital Signs report providing key data about how to improve the quality of life in Guelph and Wellington

Guelph, Ontario – Thursday, August 3, 2023 - The 2023 Vital Signs report is a collaboration between The Guelph Community Foundation and Toward Common Ground with sponsorship from United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin.

What is Vital Signs?

The report provides key indicators on the well-being of Guelph and Wellington County, utilizing local data to highlight our strengths and challenges. This year's report has taken a deep dive into our community's level of resiliency, sense of belonging, access to culture and recreational activities, income levels, housing challenges, transit options and impact on the environment.

Toward Common Ground ensures the integrity, validity and reliability of the information published. A committee of community experts advise the process to ensure Vital Signs highlights the most relevant issues at the time.

Why is it useful?

The information provided in this year's Vital Signs report provides a focus for conversations with residents, businesses, community organizations, universities and colleges, and government leaders to take action and direct resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Some key findings from the 2023 Vital Signs report are:

- **Youth Wellness:** In 2022, less than half of youth in our community reported high positive mental health scores. Only a small proportion of non-binary youth reported high positive mental health scores.
- **Homelessness:** On October 21, 2021, at least 270 people in our community were experiencing homelessness.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** About 78,000 tonnes of household waste is collected by the City of Guelph and County of Wellington each year. Only half is diverted from landfill.

"A lot has changed in our community since the last *Vital Signs* report was published five years ago," says Chris Willard, Executive Director of The Guelph Community Foundation.

From the low local unemployment rate to high access to public green space there are many positive things to report on, Willard says. There are also challenges that emerge from the data, particularly around youth mental health, our environmental footprint, and the lack of safe and affordable housing.

“While the report assists the Foundation in establishing granting priorities, we hope it will also generate discussion, inspire collaboration to work towards collective impact, and ultimately result in a healthier community and a better quality of life for all,” Willard adds.

This year’s report is intended to be an invitation to engage in important conversations about our community and guide actions toward improving it.

“We know better is possible and the 2023 Vital Signs report provides a fantastic baseline for improvement in all areas of our community” says Glenna Banda, Executive Director of United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin. “United Way looks forward to using the data to help inform both our funding priorities and community conversations to ensure we are supporting all members of our community to thrive.”

The 2018 report was previously employed by the City of Guelph as baseline research and a conversation prompt as it collaborated with partners and citizens to develop Guelph’s Community Plan.

According to the [City of Guelph](#), *A United Vision: Guelph’s Community Plan* was released in 2019 and is a “celebration of the community’s diversity, shared values and direction for the future.”

“This important document was co-created by the community and belongs to the people of Guelph. This is what Guelph has said they care about—and what they want their city to look like over the next 20 years,” states a [press release](#).

The Guelph Community Foundation’s 2023 Vital Signs report is part of a global program that has engaged more than 100 communities in Canada and around the world to mobilize the power of community knowledge for greater local impact.

“Today, we see evidence from coast to coast to coast that many people are being left behind,” says Andrea Dicks, President of Community Foundations of Canada. “Programs such as Vital Signs, with its local data and community-driven knowledge, help us make bolder and better decisions that ensure everyone has the support and programs to flourish in Guelph and Wellington County.”

Read The Guelph Community Foundation’s 2023 Vital Signs report [here](#).

The Guelph Community Foundation will continue this work and looks forward to engaging the community with the Vital Signs indicators, and how we can work together to make the community a better place for everyone.

Media Contact:

Chris Willard, Executive Director
The Guelph Community Foundation
PO Box 1311, Guelph, ON N1H 6N6
(519) 821-9216 | ed@guelphcf.ca

Glenna Banda, Executive Director
United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin
85 Westmount Rd., Guelph, ON N1H 5J2
(519) 821-0571 x23 | glenna@unitedwayguelph.com

About The Guelph Community Foundation

[The Guelph Community Foundation](#) is a charitable public foundation whose purpose is to provide leadership in community philanthropy and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Guelph and surrounding areas through endowments, stewardship, and granting programs. The Foundation pools the charitable gifts of donors into permanent, interest earning endowments. The income from the endowments supports a range of charitable programs and activities. The Guelph Community Foundation is located at 55 Wyndham St. N., Suite 4A, in the Old Quebec Street Shoppes in downtown Guelph.

About Toward Common Ground

[Toward Common Ground](#) is a collaborative of multiple social and health service organizations that identifies needs and takes collective action to improve the lives of people in Guelph and Wellington County.

About United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin

[United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin](#) strives to meet existing and emerging social needs to improve lives and build community. It has worked in our community for over 80 years to monitor and meet the pressing social needs of our community, including poverty, social isolation and mental health. Directed by a volunteer board, managed by committed staff and supported by thousands of donors, United Way works with partners in all sectors to improve lives and build community. Donations stay 100% local, always.

About Community Foundations of Canada

[Community Foundations of Canada](#) is the national network for over 200 community foundations in Canada. Together we are a philanthropic movement working across sectors to help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient communities.

About Vital Signs

[Vital Signs](#) is a national program led by community foundations and coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada that leverages local knowledge to measure the vitality of our communities and support action towards improving our collective quality of life.