

## NEWS RELEASE

### ***Generation Flux: Seismic shifts shaking Canadian youth, says report from Community Foundations of Canada***

(Ottawa, ON) Oct. 2, 2012 –The predictable trajectory that guided the lives of their parents is gone and Canada’s youth are coming of age in an era of complexity and uncertainty that has delayed or even destroyed the landmarks that once signaled life transitions, says the *Canada’s Vital Signs 2012 –Vital Youth* report.

“The linear path from school to career, home ownership, and family has disappeared,” said Ian Bird, President and CEO of Community Foundations of Canada. “We want communities to recognize that this is ‘the new normal.’ We need to work with youth to find better ways of preparing and supporting them for a journey that is less certain and more fragmented.”

The national quality-of-life report, released today, aims to provide communities and policy-makers with a snapshot of the youth experience in Canada. It pulls together research conducted by many organizations to paint a comprehensive picture of the economic, educational and societal factors affecting youth as they enter adulthood, amidst a backdrop of rapid change.

Among the report’s key findings are:

**Big debt, little work.** After graduation, youth are saddled with debt that can take 14 years to pay off. Then only piecemeal or part-time employment awaits: 1 out of 3 move into a low-skilled job after graduation.

**Summer jobs at all-time low.** The youth unemployment rate is consistently double the national average. In June, it was 14.8% compared to the national average of 7.2% and summer jobs in 2012 were at the lowest level since data was first collected in 1977.

**Delays in post-secondary.** Young people are delaying the start of post-secondary education to improve high-school grades, or save for tuition, which has risen up to 200% in some provinces in the past 20 years.

**Retirees still working.** Young people today face competition from Baby Boomers who are hanging onto jobs longer, or returning to work after retirement age.

Young people are already feeling financial and other impacts. A staggering 3.2 million of 12- to 19-year-olds in Canada are at risk for developing depression. A recent CAMH study of Ontario students also found that “the rate of students reporting psychological distress has risen to 43%, up from 36% in the 1999 survey.”

But growing up in an era of rapid change has also helped prepare youth for some of the challenges ahead. They are tech-savvy, connected to vast networks and are passionate about public policy and global issues, even if they don’t show it on voting day or via traditional institutions. They place a high value on personal relationships and want to align their values with the work they do.

“If any country can grapple with these challenges, it’s Canada,” said Bird. “We are one of the best educated countries in the world. But like others, we need to come to grips with the gap between who is thriving and who is being left behind. The consequences of inaction are too serious – for young people and our communities.”

The *Vital Youth* report is supported by Deloitte and will be released today at 9:30 a.m. at Carleton University’s School of Public Policy and Administration, followed by a press conference at Parliament Hill at 12 noon. Community Foundations of Canada is also holding a *Vital Youth Dialogue and Design Workshop* in Ottawa on Oct. 3, to begin moving from research to action.

### **Communities across Canada releasing local reports**

*Vital Signs* is an annual community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada. It provides a comprehensive, reader-friendly look at how our communities are faring in key quality-of-life areas such as learning, health, housing and the environment.

Today, 14 community foundations across Canada launch their own local reports at [www.vitalsignscanada.ca](http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca).

Community Foundations of Canada is the national network for Canada's more than 180 community foundations, which help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work, and play. Find out more at [www.cfc-fcc.ca](http://www.cfc-fcc.ca).

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**Note to editors: A backgrounder with Vital Youth statistics and a full research summary are available at [www.vitalsignscanada.ca/en/vitalyouth](http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca/en/vitalyouth)**

For further information please contact:

Skana Gee

Communications Coordinator  
Community Foundations of Canada

P: 902-466-7191

C: 902-223-5234

E: [sgee@cfc-fcc.ca](mailto:sgee@cfc-fcc.ca)

Anne-Marie McElrone

Vice President, Public Engagement  
Community Foundations of Canada

C: 902-223-0674

E: [amcelrone@cfc-fcc.ca](mailto:amcelrone@cfc-fcc.ca)