

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
January 21, 2011

## Vital Signs Committee begins work on report

*Lots to be done before October publishing*



Lynne Romano, Holly Magoon, Devin Solberg & Denise English participate in a Vital Signs webinar. All four are part of a steering committee for Golden & Area A and will be publishing the community's first report in October 2011.

(Golden, BC) – Golden will be going through the Vital Signs report process with communities throughout BC and across Canada.

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, Community Foundation members from nine communities met in Vancouver to learn more about the process from Vital Signs Coordinator, Sarah Lyons, and Community Foundations of Canada's Director of Regional Strategies, Barbara McMillan. The event was an opportunity to network with other BC communities and collaborate on the development of their individual reports. Golden was represented by Ryan Watmough, Executive Director of the Golden & District Community Foundation.

The Vital Signs report process is designed to measure the health of community, provide accessible information, engage community, and encourage action on issues. Each October the results from individual communities are published in a national report found in the Globe & Mail. About 25 communities across Canada from little Wolfville, NS to metropolitan Toronto, ON have completed a Vital Signs report over the last 5 years and its anticipated that there will be at least six BC communities of varying size publishing this fall.

At the presentation, Lorraine Copas, Executive Director of SPARC BC, explained the benefits of the Vital Signs process. "The power of Vital Signs is that it resonates with the communities who have done it, initiates planning and allows the tracking of progress. Selecting the right indicators is 'key' because they need to reflect the diversity of perspectives in your community and will likely be used to gauge progress in subsequent years."

Don Basham, a Director from Sunshine Coast Community Foundation noted that he learned more about his community through the 2009 report than any other process he has been involved in. Don led his community through a brief update in 2010 and anticipates doing a new full report in 2011.

Lidia Kemeny, Director of Partnerships & Project at the Vancouver Foundation, noted that the Vital Signs report was the most interesting project that she has overseen. "The challenge is to determine indicators that are universal to all of the communities within the reporting area. Then, once you have the data, the next issue is 'what do we do with it?' How do we support communities to integrate the findings from Vital Signs into strategies for community development?"

The Golden & District Community Foundation initiated the local Vital Signs report project in March of 2010 in order for the community to better understand how the area is performing and where resources should be focused. A Steering Committee was struck in July, which is now looking for any local data sets that local community organizations may have – especially those from education, recreation, police, safety, development, transportation, non-profits and government. Through this community consultation process, it's hoped that the best local granting decisions can be made and new projects will focus on areas where improvement is necessary.

Anyone in the community is welcome to get involved with the Vital Signs Committee. The volunteer group meets about twice each month and regularly posts news and research on <http://goldenandareaavitalsigns2011.blogspot.com>. The Committee is looking to meet with local groups and they invite everyone to contact Ryan Watmough to set up a meeting.

To learn more about your community foundation and the ongoing Vital Signs project, please bookmark [www.goldencommunityfoundation.ca](http://www.goldencommunityfoundation.ca)

***About the Golden & District Community Foundation***

*The Golden & District Community Foundation's mission is to attract and effectively grow permanent funds; provide leadership and administration that helps in addressing significant community needs; and help donors fulfill their philanthropic interests.*

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