

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
September 23, 2011

**Golden & Area A's Vital Signs report available soon**

*Community indicator report published on October 4<sup>th</sup>*



Golden & Area A's Vital Signs report will be available on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Golden & District Community Foundation's Ryan Watmough, Executive Director, and Nola Milum, Chairperson, take a sneak peak at the results from the community survey administered in August. Championed by the Community Foundation, the report was made possible with help from local volunteer researchers.

(Golden, BC) – Golden & Area A's Vital Signs report is in. We just have to wait until October 4<sup>th</sup> to read it.

One thousand copies of Golden & Area A's Vital Signs report have been printed and are to be distributed on October 4<sup>th</sup>, which is the national release date for all 22 communities across Canada who have completed individual reports for 2011.

While Golden & Area A is one of the smallest communities - and the Golden & District Community Foundation (GD CF) is one of the smallest community foundations - to ever attempt this report, local public engagement surpassed levels seen in much larger communities.

Over the summer, more than 300 respondents completed the online Vital Signs survey, which asked local citizens how they felt our community was performing in twelve quality of life issue areas – from work to health and getting started to getting around.

Throughout the project individual groups were asked where they felt they had the most control over a particular issue area. At the 2011 Kicking Horse Country Chamber of Commerce AGM, members were asked to note where their organization had the most control and potential impact. Not surprisingly, the Economy and Work were the most popular from this group.

At a Forest Industry Session in April, attendees noted that Work and the Environment were considered the two most important issue areas for Golden & Area A.

Golden & Area A's Vital Signs project began in 2010 with public consultation sessions and local quality of life issue identification. The volunteer steering committee took the input and broke it down to twelve issue areas, where they then researched our community's performance in at least four indicators per issue area. The soon-to-be-released report will describe how the community feels about the past, current and expected future performance of individual issue areas and how which ones need to be community priorities.

The Vital Signs initiative started in the 1990s and the Toronto Community Foundation produced the first community report in 2001. Since then many communities across Canada have followed and used the tool to better understand their local needs. According to Vital Signs Canada, the report is an effective tool for each participating community and has four key purposes:

- 1) Increase the effectiveness of the foundation's grantmaking
- 2) Better informing our donors and the broader community, including policy makers, about issues and opportunities in the community
- 3) Assisting foundations and others in taking the lead and making connections between individuals and groups to address those issues
- 4) Providing a context and catalyst for community discussion and deliberation

"It's been an eye-opening process of public engagement and statistical research," stated Denise English, Vital Signs Steering Committee Chairperson. "Our volunteer researchers have used data from Stats Canada, BC Stats, and local organizations to describe the performance of each issue area. For those individuals and groups that want to learn more, we are making all of our 'Deep Data' documents online and hope that, as a community, we can track these measures over time."

The GD CF will incorporate this feedback into their upcoming Community Grants Program, which is available to local charitable projects. Taking it one step further, the GD CF hopes that other funders,

service clubs and organizations get together and create projects that will address the community's priorities, as outlined in Golden & Area A's Vital Signs report.

Printed reports will be circulated throughout the community on October 4<sup>th</sup> and citizens, groups, businesses and politicians are invited to read how the survey respondents graded each issue area and see if the local and national statistical data backs it up. All residents are invited to a report release event scheduled for 7:30pm October 5<sup>th</sup> at the Rock Water Grill and Bar.

***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.*

To learn more about your community foundation and *Golden & Area A's Vital Signs* project, please bookmark [www.goldencommunityfoundation.ca](http://www.goldencommunityfoundation.ca).

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