



SUNSHINE COAST'S

VitalSigns® 2010

- X One year update
- X Eleven key issues
- X Over 50 community experts involved

In October of 2009, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation published Vital Signs for the first time. Vital Signs is a snapshot of our community that presents our challenges and celebrates our accomplishments. We were encouraged by the overwhelming response to this first Report and it is our intention to continue to publish Vital Signs.

We feel, however, that the 2009 report has a shelf life of at least two years and therefore we will not publish a full report in 2010. Instead, here is a two page update on this past year produced with input from our Vital Signs management team in consultation with some 50 community experts in their fields of interest. A full Vital Signs report will be published again in October of 2011.

The Foundation's role in Vital Signs is to document challenges and opportunities in a variety of areas of interest on the Sunshine Coast in a factual manner. It is not our role to suggest actions or solutions to these challenges and opportunities but, it is our hope that the contents of this report will evoke a call to action to the community be it you as an individual, an organization involved in one or more of the areas of interest or a government official. Together we can create a difference to make the Sunshine Coast the best it can be.

In the past year, the world economy remained unstable and concerns about our environment continued to be a focus affecting our lives. These two global issues have had a ripple down effect to our local community level that continues to affect all of us in one way or another.

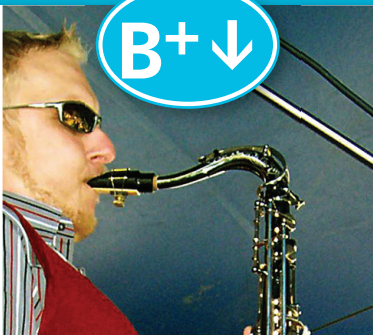
It has resulted in tough decisions being made by all levels of government, institutions and our local non profit organizations. Much of this report reflects this as well as linking themes between issues such as poverty and education, demographics, employment, housing, getting started, and volunteering.

The indicators in Vital Signs 2009 were graded by the community through an online survey resulting in the letter grades being assigned. This update 2010 report was not graded and simply reflects an improvement, decline or holding stable in the past year as determined by the Vital Signs management committee from information, anecdotes, perceptions and reports secured from the community experts in their fields of interest. Some of these full reports can be accessed through the Vital Signs page on the Foundation's website.

Finally, your feedback on this 2010 update and the full 2009 report is important to us as we move now to the full 2011 report. Help us make this report card on our community better than ever by posting your comments through "Contact Us" at www.sccfoundation.com.



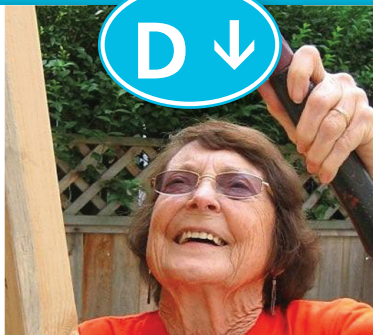
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Arts & Culture

While the Arts and Culture sector on the Coast continues to be vibrant, severe government cuts in funding just after Vital Signs 2009 was released had a negative impact on the sector. From a decade high of \$77,000 in 2008/09, funding from gaming sources has been reduced 99% to \$630 in 2010/11. Volunteer burnout continues to be a big concern as evidenced by the potential for increasing losses of events and organizations. Many in the arts community suggest that the sector continues to be hampered by not having one voice to represent the arts on the Sunshine Coast.

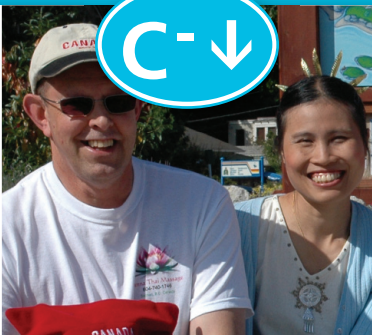
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Housing

All indications continue to point to a lack of affordable housing being a big problem on the Coast. While housing prices fell in the later part of 2009, data for this year shows that real estate prices have crept back up and are close to pre-2008 prices. Household income required to buy a median-priced home is \$90,000. Only 18 per cent of Coast households have an annual income of \$90,000 or more. One positive sign is the planning to establish a Regional Housing Committee. Objectives of this committee composed of local governments and community members would be advisory and advocacy. And while federal money may be coming to housing on the Coast it is primarily for seniors or supportive housing. 'Work force' housing continues to be where the need is greatest.

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Getting Started

A lack of vital youth employment is one of the strongest indicators of the difficulties young people have getting started on the Sunshine Coast. This is a problem being addressed by several community stakeholders through ongoing forums. Federal government summer student employment was significantly cut in summer 2010. And childcare for children under three continues to be a concern. There are not enough trained early childhood educators on the Coast. Having sufficient numbers to run courses at Capilano University has been a challenge. Learning English continues to be a top concern to new immigrants. The ESL program at Capilano University is serving about 30 students at present.

**B →**

Learning

With the economic downturn, families are departing the Coast. Student population is declining. Ten percent of a research sample of coast families had incomes below \$30,000. Family income is not the sole determinant of children's development, but children living in poor economic circumstances sometimes face challenges. For the Sunshine Coast, on the Early Development Instrument (EDI), the prevalence of children at risk in the measure of language and cognitive development was high. There is an identified need for more support and education for grandparents who are parenting, very young parents and adults with special needs. There are access issues: distance education is impacted when someone does not have access to a computer; lack of transportation to learning centres and to Childcare can prevent young parents from continuing their education. The Early Childhood Development strategic plan and the Sunshine Coast Literacy plan are indicators that these concerns are being addressed.

**C+ →**

Belonging & Leadership

The main concerns in the non-profit world are volunteer burnout, ageing volunteers and succession planning. Although there has been no decrease in the number of people volunteering on the Coast, there has been a change in the type of volunteering – people are less engaged in activities requiring a regular, ongoing commitment such as board work and leadership positions. Caught in the Time Crunch Report, commissioned by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, indicates that young people are also not volunteering in traditional ways. Many local organizations such as Sunshine Coast Community Services Society continue to provide services not covered by government departments.

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Health & Wellness

Health and wellness is a concern for Vital Signs reporting in that there is no accurate way to measure local health. Information from Statistics Canada lumps all of the area covered by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority in one measurement, Lower Sunshine Coast data cannot be gleaned from these stats. Poverty is once again identified as a factor in health particularly as it pertains to young children and teens. Areas to focus on are mental health issues, the increased need for health care for seniors versus young people and the replacement of retiring doctors.

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Gap Between Rich & Poor

The gap between rich and poor continues to expand on the Coast. Youth poverty is a huge problem. Many of the youth are living very marginally. This becomes more complicated when the young person also has learning disabilities and/or significant employment challenges. There is also an increase in the number of single senior women with lower income. Government cuts played a part in decreasing services to the poor in the latter part of the year. Funding for the community kitchen of \$20,000 for two years was discontinued. The Sunshine Coast Food Bank has seen a significant increase in users to date in 2010. Bellies and Babies, a pre- and post-natal nutrition, education and support program for young parents has seen increased numbers.

**C ↑**

Safety

The Coast continues to be a safe place to live. All reported crime categories are down over the last reported year. Areas of concern in this category include a decrease in funding for restorative justice, a program that has great success in changing young people's attitude to crime. There is perception in the community that not enough citizens are adequately prepared in the event of an earthquake or similar event. Also more young people need to learn first aid to build sustainability in emergency response.

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Economic Health

Economic health on the Coast had some positive indicators over the past year. A glut of inventory slowed the construction industry down over the past year but building permit data is now showing an improvement in activity. The hospital expansion is identified as a major project with positive economic impact. While there has been some rehiring in building trades and sub trades due to increased construction activity, one unsettling note was the first layoffs at the Sunshine Coast Regional District in about 12 years. The layoffs were due to budget constraints. There have also been educational layoffs due to declining enrolments. Government grants added some stimulus to the local economy through the recreation and tourism sectors.

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Environment

Local governments are making significant commitments to address climate change through an extensive Community Energy and Emissions Plan. The plan aims to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions throughout the community through implementing a range of actions while meeting regulatory commitments set by the province of B.C. Better measurement systems are now in place for monitoring air quality and people are becoming more conscious of their water usage.

**D →**

Getting Around

On the Coast's transportation front the main concern still is the ferry system. However, in May 2010, School District 46 (Sunshine Coast) entered into a "Contract for Service" with BC Ferry Services Inc. Under this agreement, students on eligible school trips and school sports events travel to Horseshoe Bay at no cost during school months only. Accompanying adults and vehicles are charged at the regular rate. The community pays for this reduction in fares through a small lift (maximum 0.5%) in regular fares. Since its inception in May, almost 2,000 students have benefitted. The highway continues to be a source of concern for many. Regular calls come for a bypass from the Langdale Ferry Terminal to Sechelt. Transit ridership has steadily increased since 2008 and is estimated to surpass 2009 this year. And finally Pender Harbour has a bus.



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