



COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA FONDATIONS
COMMUNAUTAIRES
DU CANADA

NEWS RELEASE

FOUNDATIONS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES DURING DOWNTURN

Survey shows 90% of community foundations still granting

OTTAWA (December 16, 2008) – A survey of Canada’s 165 community foundations shows the vast majority of foundations are continuing to provide financial support to local charities, in spite of the economic downturn affecting the global economy.

More than 90% of the largest community foundations in the country are continuing to grant, albeit at reduced levels due to the economic downturn, and all are formulating local action plans to help support community needs in a variety of ways. The survey was conducted over the past week by Community Foundations of Canada (CFC), the national membership association for the country’s community foundation movement.

“We know our communities need us now more than ever and the bottom line is: we are there for you,” said Monica Patten, President and CEO. “No one is immune from this crisis, but we are injecting thousands of dollars into thousands of charities every day. And every community foundation in the country is focused on ways to support local needs – financially and in a myriad of other ways.”

With a history dating back to 1921, Canadian community foundations have weathered hard economic times before. “We lived through The Depression. The 80s recession. The tech boom and bust,” said Patten. Long-term sustainability is what we’re all about.”

Weathering the storm

Community foundations across Canada are responding to local needs in a number of ways. Some are using reserves built up during better times to continue granting, others are getting in touch with long-time donors to encourage immediate gifts to support local priorities.

“The support we’re seeing from the community and from our donors is incredible,” says Jane Neath, Executive Director of the Cambridge and North Dumfries Community Foundation in southern Ontario. “This week I received a \$50,000 donation from an anonymous donor who wanted to support the community’s immediate needs.”

“In these tough economic times it’s extremely important to reach out to the community and help those in need,” said Peter Partridge who, with his wife, provided an immediate grant to a children’s charity through the Niagara Community Foundation. “We were very cognizant of the immediate need as both the local and the global economies continue to suffer. Helping others during these uncertain times was an easy decision for us to make.”

The Calgary Foundation: is convening a Sustainability Summit to engage the government, corporate and charitable sectors in a discussion to find collaborative solutions that support the issues facing the charitable sector, including the additional pressures created by the economic downturn.

The Central Okanagan Foundation: Donors, local businesses and the foundation’s own board members have already pledged more than \$100,000 to support local charities and more contributions are on the way. “Our supporters have made it clear that they will help us find other ways to continue our support of the sector,” said Executive Director Leanne Hammond Komori.

Edmonton Community Foundation: will continue granting at approximately 3.5% so it can meet multi-year commitments to important collaborative community initiatives, affirming the foundation's commitment to a long-term view of philanthropy.

Guelph Community Foundation: A donor handed the Executive Director a cheque for \$4,000 saying “Use this where you feel it is most needed.”

Hamilton Community Foundation: is meeting with the Mayor and other civic leaders to collaborate on the best way to meet the community’s needs. It is also surveying charities and using networks developed through its poverty work to determine the needs of those most affected by the downturn.

Donors will be informed of the needs and asked for additional support. The foundation will also identify other potential partnerships to assist with funding.

The Lethbridge Community Foundation: is sponsoring a conference to bring local funders and charities together to share funding opportunities and help with grant applications and running fund raising events.

The Niagara Community Foundation: is asking existing and new donors to earmark part of their gift to respond to immediate local needs. Local fundraising events held to build up various charitable endowments are also being asked to contribute some of those proceeds to local charities right away.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation: is approaching its past directors to encourage a gift to meet immediate local needs.

The Winnipeg Foundation: The oldest community foundation in Canada is continuing to grant at the same level as last year, and has also created an advertising campaign in the local newspaper, encouraging residents to still give to their favourite charities during this difficult time.

Success not measured by market returns

The impact of the downturn on charities is similar to what Canadians are experiencing with their retirement savings. Any organization that holds an endowment fund that is invested – including hospitals, universities, and commercial gift funds – is affected by the current economic situation.

“Whether you run a major business, a charity or a household, we’re all facing the same reality. But our success is not measured by daily market returns,” says Patten. “Our success will be defined by our response. Do we come together to find solutions? Do we find new ways to support our communities?”

CFC is adopting a three-point action plan to help communities over the coming year.

1. Support community foundations: by creating opportunities to share tools and strategies in response to the downturn

2. Work with regulatory bodies: work closely with Canada Revenue Agency to clarify rules and regulations governing endowment funds and research provincial trustee rules regarding encroachment of capital
3. Work with the charitable sector on common issues and opportunities

About Canada's community foundations

Canada's 165 community foundations help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work and play. Together we are one of the largest supporters of Canadian communities, providing \$176 million in support of local priorities and organizations in 2007. To find out more visit www.cfc-fcc.ca

-30-

Contact

Anne-Marie McElrone

Director of Communications and Marketing

902.461.8284

amcelrone@cfc-fcc.ca

Disponible en français <http://www.cfc-fcc.ca/accueil.cfm>