2014

Report

poverty
initiative

Plans for Action
as a Community

Low-income households spend **63%** of their income on basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, compared to **43%** for an average income household.

"Poverty is everybody's business"

Eliminating poverty remains one of the most potent and persistent challenges we face in our community. The statistics are daunting, and the real impact on human lives – people who are our neighbours, friends and family – can make your heart wince.

So many of our children, families and neighbours are vulnerable to desperate circumstances, which can be caused in an instant by an unexpected layoff or a family breakup, an accident or sudden illness – or by ongoing cycles that span generations.

Living in poverty means there is not enough money for the basics of a healthy life. Poverty imposes hard economic choices — between shelter and medicine, food and transportation, childcare and employment opportunities, moving towards a self-sufficient future versus just getting through today. Collectively, we need to change these circumstances.
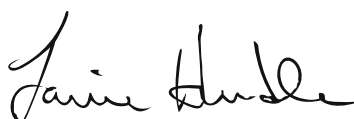
When poverty is everybody's business, we make real progress ...

With this report, we are pleased to highlight some of the meaningful progress that has been made over the past year, thanks to those who are part of this great effort — agencies who work with clients in poverty, policy makers who shape the environment that reduces or sustains poverty, individuals and families who live the experience every day, and all of us who must collectively understand this complex issue and stand together to one day eradicate the stress, suffering and hopelessness that walk hand in hand with poverty.

Thank you to all those who worked so hard this past year to build momentum in reducing poverty in our community. Here we're pleased to report on some of those milestones. Our goal is ambitious, and we will accomplish it, together, as a community.

Co-Chair Bhavana Varma
President & CEO
United Way serving KFL&A

Co-Chair Lanie Hurdle
Commissioner, Community Services
City of Kingston

Poverty costs Canada up to $30 billion every year.

1 in 7 live in poverty in our community.

Making Progress Together: A Framework for Working Groups

In September 2010, a report to Kingston's City Council suggested a coordinated community strategy be used to reduce poverty. The following year, a series of community engagements were held to develop goals and objectives.

Five working groups then began efforts to address major causes of poverty and respond to the need for more affordable housing, social services and community supports, access to skills development and employment, community supports for education, and health supports.

A comprehensive report on the accomplishments of the working groups was published in 2013. This report highlights selected initiatives and progress over the past year.

Housing

Skills Development & Employment

Strategic Focus Areas

Health

Community Supports for Education

Social Services & Community Supports

Making Progress Together:
Updates from Working Groups

Community Supports for Education:

- The Children & Youth Services Planning Committee held planning sessions to develop common language, standards and tool kits for a parent engagement model based on local best practices.

- Work is underway to map a directory of educational supports and diagnostic services for parents and students.

- Practical solutions are being explored to address gaps in programming for children of all ages who face difficulties in school.

Health:

- The working group has developed a Poverty Impact Assessment Tool to assist organizations with policy review from a poverty reduction perspective. It will be posted on various web pages.

- Vulnerable populations were surveyed as part of the 2013 Canadian Index of Well-being Survey, and local results and recommendations are being shared.

- Progress was made in helping vulnerable persons to obtain health care at the right time and the right place to meet their needs (see features on 211 and KingstonHelps.ca).

Housing:

- Important milestones this past year included the development and initial implementation of the 10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan.

- Extensive community engagement was undertaken in support of the Rideau Heights Regeneration Strategy, as well as mapping neighbourhood organizations in North Kingston.

- The "Hope for Homes" (H4H) Network of homelessness service providers established in 2012 now meets regularly to share information, network and strengthen collective service delivery and accessibility to service.

Skills Development and Employment:

- Steps were taken to promote information sharing, mapping resources and employment supports.

- A pilot project was developed to provide complementary Kingston Transit passes to newly employed residents and support their transition into the workforce.

- A video produced by Frontenac Community Mental Health & Addictions Services (FCMHAS), called "I Look Forward to Monday Morning", is being shared with area employers as a useful resource to promote and inform employers on the benefits of hiring diversity.

Social Services and Community Supports:

- Work continued on an expanded assistance card to provide additional goods and services to eligible low income households. The existing "My Kingston" Municipal Fee Assistance Program (MFAP) card is being enhanced with pet neutering vouchers, bag tags and recycling box services, and other opportunities are being explored.

- A compact listing and map of "essential" social services has been developed for download, printing and use by agencies and residents.

- To enhance networking mechanisms for service providers, listings of existing peer groups and community service networks are in development. In March, the City hosted an information sharing forum for 60 participants called "Coming Together to Connect the Dots" — Alignment, Focus, Connection & Collaboration.
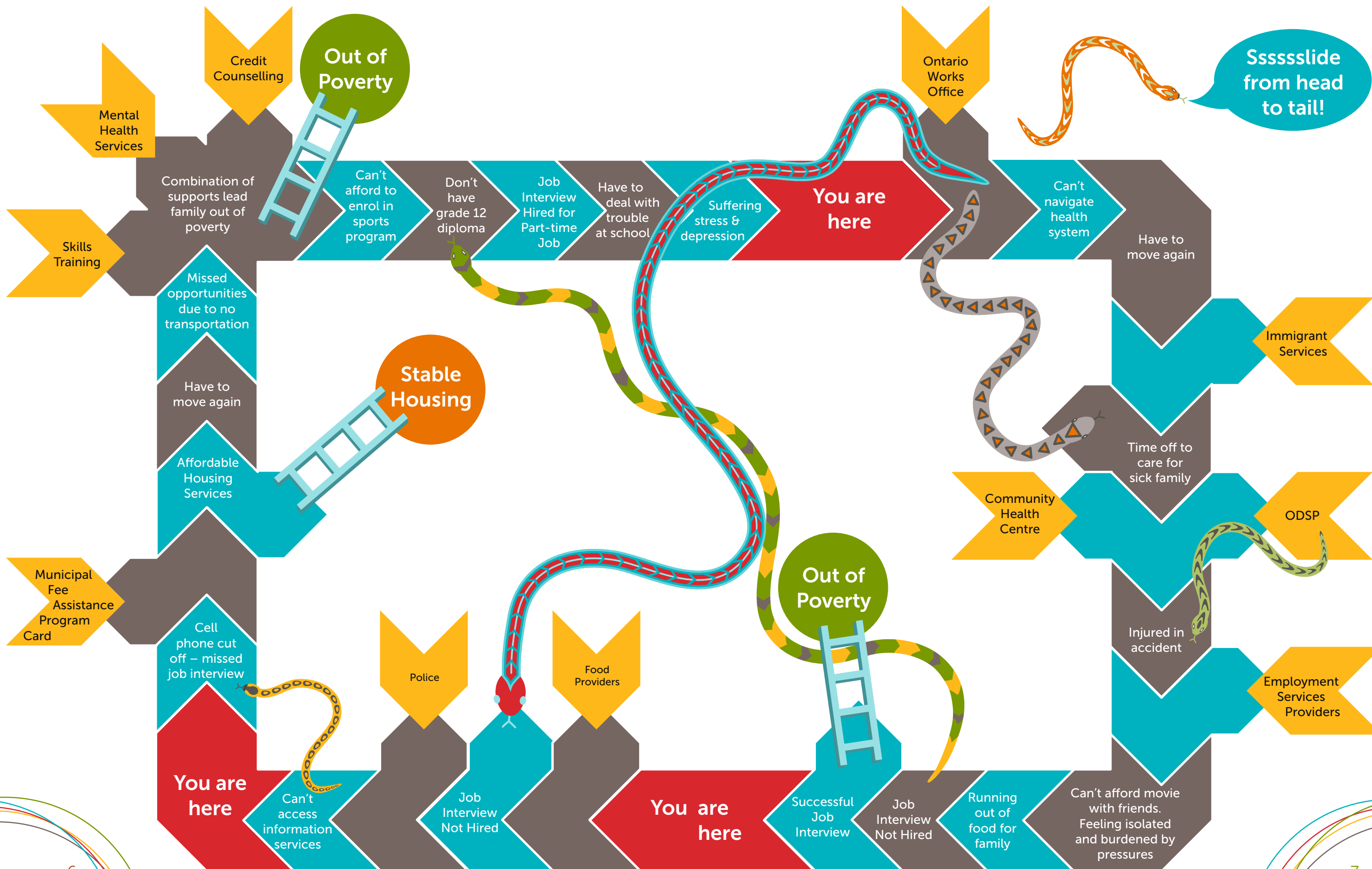
This "achievement gap" costs us all

Research confirms that high school dropouts are twice as likely to be unemployed, tend to commit more crime, have higher incidence of illness and drug use, and tend to rely more on social assistance.

$307 billion: the estimated collective lifetime loss of earning potential of high school dropouts in Canada

$623 billion: the estimated collective costs of health care over a lifetime for high school dropouts in Canada

Overcoming challenges, striving for a good life beyond poverty

When 18-year-old Cody Allan stepped up to the stage as a member of Frontenac Secondary School's Class of 2014, he might have been the most surprised. "I was pretty sure I was going to drop out," he says.

Cody was two years old when his parents divorced and his mother left town. He stayed in Kingston with his alcoholic father. Without much money coming in, Cody often woke up hungry. Often the only food he ate was from his elementary school's breakfast program.

At 10 Cody was working part-time for a living. School was hardly a priority – and it showed. By Grade 8 he was struggling just to pass.

By the time he started high school, he was ready to drop out. That's when a brochure came in the mail. "It said, 'Would you like to go to post-secondary school with a $4,000 scholarship?" Cody says. "I knew it was meant for me."

The brochure was from Pathways to Education, a Kingston Community Health Centres program that helps students like Cody learn to succeed – in school and in life.

Pathways to Education hooked Cody up with tutors and with a mentor, Roger Romero, who has been in his life ever since. "My marks went up right away," he says.

Unfortunately, his personal life was moving in a different direction. After a dispute with his father, he moved in with his mother in Deseronto. The commute made it tough for him to spend time at Pathways to Education, and he felt his victories slipping away.

A few months later Cody moved to Westbrook, which brought him closer to Pathways to Education and back on the road to stability. It's not an easy road. To make ends meet, he works full time in addition to school. Still, he knows it was the right choice. "I was happy to be able to spend more time at Pathways to Education," he says. "I feel like someone actually cares about me."

Through Pathways to Education, Cody discovered he had a gift for public speaking. Over the last few years, he's spoken frequently on behalf of the United Way. "The United Way makes so many things possible," he says. Pathways to Education is just one of them. "Last year I learned that the breakfast program in my elementary school was funded by the United Way," he says. "They've literally saved my life in more ways than one."

The speaking engagements aren't just a way for Cody to express himself. They also count toward his contract. Every Pathways to Education student creates a contract that enables them to earn their scholarships. Attending tutoring sessions, learning life skills, and taking part in enrichment activities like public speaking are just a few of the ways students earn their money.

The money Cody has earned will go to good use when he starts his first semester at St. Lawrence College.

Enhancing "My Kingston" cards to improve service access

Through its Municipal Fee Assistance Program (MFAP), the City of Kingston helps city residents who live in eligible lower-income households to access a variety of needed programs and subsidies. The "My Kingston" card helps them get around Kingston and lead active, healthy lives.

Initiated in 2010, the program originally offered a discount in the cost of a monthly Kingston Transit Bus Pass as well as subsidies through the PROkids program for community-run sports, cultural, arts and recreation programs for children and youth (aged 0-18 yrs). The service list also includes SPARK, the Subsidy Program for Affordable Recreation in Kingston, which provides assistance for city-run Recreation and Leisure memberships, programs, classes, camps and fees for adults and children alike.

This unique Kingston program now assists more than 3,000 Kingston residents per year.

The MFAP service list has recently been expanded to include a new $100 subsidy toward the cost of Pet Neutering. A Transportation Employment Pilot is underway to assess the benefit of providing a free two-month Kingston Transit Bus Pass to residents who secure new employment. Additional services, such as access to banking services and affordable bicycles, are being contemplated for future expansion of the program.

The "My Kingston" cards program now assists more than 3,000 Kingston residents per year!

Dress for Success

The Women Served

- 70% are single mothers raising children

- 60% are ages 18-38

- 100% have lived below the poverty line; are referred by non-profit organizations

- 75% have retained their jobs after one year

Supporting transitions to the workplace

Transit passes are being made available as part of a year-long pilot project to help support those who depend on public transportation when starting new employment:

- 200 bus passes to travel for free will be provided for the first two months, and offered at a discounted rate for the remaining 10 months of the program.

- Eligible residents must have a civic address in the City of Kingston.

- Participants will also qualify for other MFAP programs like recreation passes, vouchers etc. and do not need to go through another income qualifying process.

- Staff at employment centres acting as referral and screening agencies (CERC North, KEYS Job Centre, ACFOMI Employment Services and the St. Lawrence College Employment Service) will complete a form and send it to the City.

- An evaluation process is built in to the program – 3, 6 and 12-month surveys with 3 questions will help confirm whether the passes helped them secure/retain employment.

Dress for Success:

Many new employees struggle with initial expenses when they get a job. Similar to the transit pass program's aim of reducing barriers to employment, the Dress for Success program has now been established and provides clothes and support to help disadvantaged women with their interviews and work clothing.

The program provides each woman with tools to help her succeed in all stages of her professional career cycle: professional attire (career suits, cosmetics, footwear and accessories); a professional women's group to provide a network of support, practical information and inspiration; and a career centre with ongoing mentoring to provide advice, technology skills, job-seeking support, financial literacy, and educational or career-building materials.

To learn more, visit: www.dressforsuccess.org/kingston

Building Bridges Out of Poverty

Two days of community development workshops to be held this year take aim at building bridges out of poverty.

Poverty impacts all of us. People living in poverty face challenges that are virtually unknown to those in the middle class or wealthy class. Bridges Out of Poverty is a framework to help all sectors of the community understand the hidden rules of poverty; open up minds to the culture of poverty; and build relationships to create a sustainable community.

The workshops being held this fall will cover the ten primary constructs on which the framework is built, namely:

• Economic lens

• Defining poverty

• Address inequalities in access to resources

• Build relationships of mutual respect

• People in all classes and sectors need to be at the decision-making table

• Mental models of poverty

• Stabilize the environment, remove barriers, build resources (individual, community, institutional)

• Address all causes of poverty

• Build long-term support (individual, community, institutional)

• Build sustainable communities where everyone can live well

With a common lens and understanding through which participants can view themselves, their clients and the community, participants can then improve skills used by front line staff and redevelop programs to improve relationships and build outcomes.

Many communities across North America and around the world have begun implementing this framework in their communities and our presenters will share the work they have done in another Ontario community as a successful example.

For more information, see: http://www.wecanreducepoverty.ca

Poverty impacts all of us. People living in poverty face challenges that are virtually unknown to those in the middle class or wealthy class.

Why?

Why is the policy or program being introduced or changed at this time?

Where?

Are there neighbourhoods in Kingston that could be more affected than others? Could there be a different impact for the rural population than the urban?

Who?

Who needs to be consulted to help identify the impacts this policy/program could have on this group and potential strategies for resolution?

How?

How these groups could be positively or negatively affected? Examples of how they may be impacted include: Financial access, Readability, Transportation barriers, Physical mobility and Living environment.

What?

What can be taken out of this policy or program, or added, to make it more equitable and address the impacts on the group? What other related policies or programs may need to be adjusted or created?

Success?

How will you know that the steps taken to make the policy or program more equitable and address the impacts on the group have worked? How will you measure your success?

Share?

How will you disseminate the information you collected? How will you share your successes?

Poverty Impact Assessment Tool

One of the main purposes of public policy is to try and ensure that all members within a given community are safe, healthy, have access to the basic necessities of life and are able to contribute and participate fully within the community. In other words, to improve the quality of life for all.

It is well documented that programs and policies do not impact all people in the same way. Sometimes this is done intentionally as they are targeted for certain groups of people or issues. Often, however, the impacts are unintentional and what on the surface may look like it is positive for "all" with "equal" access and impact, in fact may result in some unexpected negative results for some groups of people.

Over the past decade, many measurement and assessment tools have been created that focus on how an individual or group is doing compared to a community at large. A new, simple and easy-to-use tool — a Poverty Impact Assessment Tool — has been developed for local use and provides organizations with a few key questions to ask.

It walks planners through questions about why their policy or program is being implemented, who could be affected, where and how, what can be done to make the policy more equitable, how it will be monitored, and how results might be shared with others.

For all those living in poverty in any community, the data is very clear. Their quality of life is markedly different than others. Their physical health, employment, sense of belonging, education, participation and access to services for basic needs, to name just a few, are impacted negatively.

In addition, there are groups within a community who are more "vulnerable" to experiencing poverty than other groups. In some areas, for example, needs in Kingston mirror those of priority groups identified at a national level such as recent immigrants, aboriginals, those with mental or physical activity limitations, and female single-parent families.

Connecting youth with education, career options and employment

An educated young workforce is critical to the future success of the community, yet a disturbing proportion of students fail to complete high school on time and/or go on to further education. To gain the skills needed for employment, youth need to complete high school and go on to acquire the education, skills and/or training to be ready to join the workforce.

Kingston is one of 16 communities in Canada with a Pathways to Education program, a community-based program that has been helping youth in low-income communities stay in school and graduate to post-secondary. Working in partnership with governments, social welfare agencies, and hundreds of diverse volunteers who share their talent and wisdom, Pathways to Education is helping to break the cycle of poverty and enable strategic, long-term social change. The Pathways to Education model works extremely well and is currently offered only in certain neighbourhoods.

In Calgary a similar community-wide program connects youth to the opportunities they need to be successful in school and beyond. The pilot project aims to reduce the drop-out rate by 50% over the next five years and connect 3,000 kids to the supports and positive relationships they need to achieve success. Their focus includes keeping youth in school; bringing youth back to school; and linking youth to a diverse array of post-secondary and career options, including trades, college, university, business and other opportunities.

Working with Pathways to Education and other partners, the United Way plans to develop a new project modeled on these and similar successful programs. The initiative will engage residents, companies, organizations and government working together to ensure more youth successfully complete high school and transition to further education, work and adult life.

The adapted version of the model will place particular emphasis on youth employment and connecting youth with mentors from local workplaces. The United Way approach will feature shared responsibility and collective action to connect youth to positive adults, remove barriers to success and help change attitudes and behaviours.

For information on Pathways to Education and the Calgary initiative, see http://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca/en/about-us/pathways-model and http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/main/our-work/all-in-for-youth

Focus on Transition-Aged Youth 16-24:

New Protocol helps smooth transitions among mental health services

Over the past year, the KFL&A Service Collaborative has developed a new protocol to help address a gap: the lack of a clear transition pathway from child and youth services into adult services for youth who are aged 16-24, with mental health and/or addictions issues, who require specialized complex care, and who are not engaged in service or transitioning between services.

Ideal processes and supports for transition include:

• Information transfer (information continuity);

• Periods of parallel care (relational continuity);

• Transition planning (cross-boundary and team continuity); and

• Continuity of care (long-term continuity).

In the course of its development, the protocol evolved as it incorporated extensive consultations with the community, including a World Café with frontline staff and several focus groups with priority audiences (transition-age youth, families, youth at risk, francophone and aboriginal communities).

This protocol will confirm agreement between agencies regarding methods to help youth make the transition from children and youth mental health and/or addictions services to adult services using a coordinated team and an individualized plan to ensure ongoing success for the young person.

The protocol documents a step-by-step process to help manage the transition effectively and includes agency profiles, templates and tools to support the process.

The KFL&A Service Collaborative consists of representatives from human service providers across sectors and, with support from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), has been charged with making changes in the community to improve access and coordination of services for those with mental health/addiction problems, focusing on children and youth in transition.

Video provides employers with a useful resource for hiring diversity

A video titled "I Look Forward to Monday Morning" has been produced by Frontenac Community Mental Health And Addictions Services (FCMHAS) to provide a useful resource for employers. It is used to promote and inform employers on the benefits of hiring diversity, and has been shared with the Employment Network Committee by the Skills Development and Employment Working Group.

The video can be found on YouTube and is an excellent example for employers to think about hiring in a new light. It encourages employers to offer positions and support to candidates during what can be a difficult time in their lives but who will often become loyal employees depending on the supports they received when returning to the workplace.

In January 2014, FCMHAS participated in the Kingston District Human Resources Professional Association's annual Dine and Learn event and presented the video to the 160 members of the business community who attended.
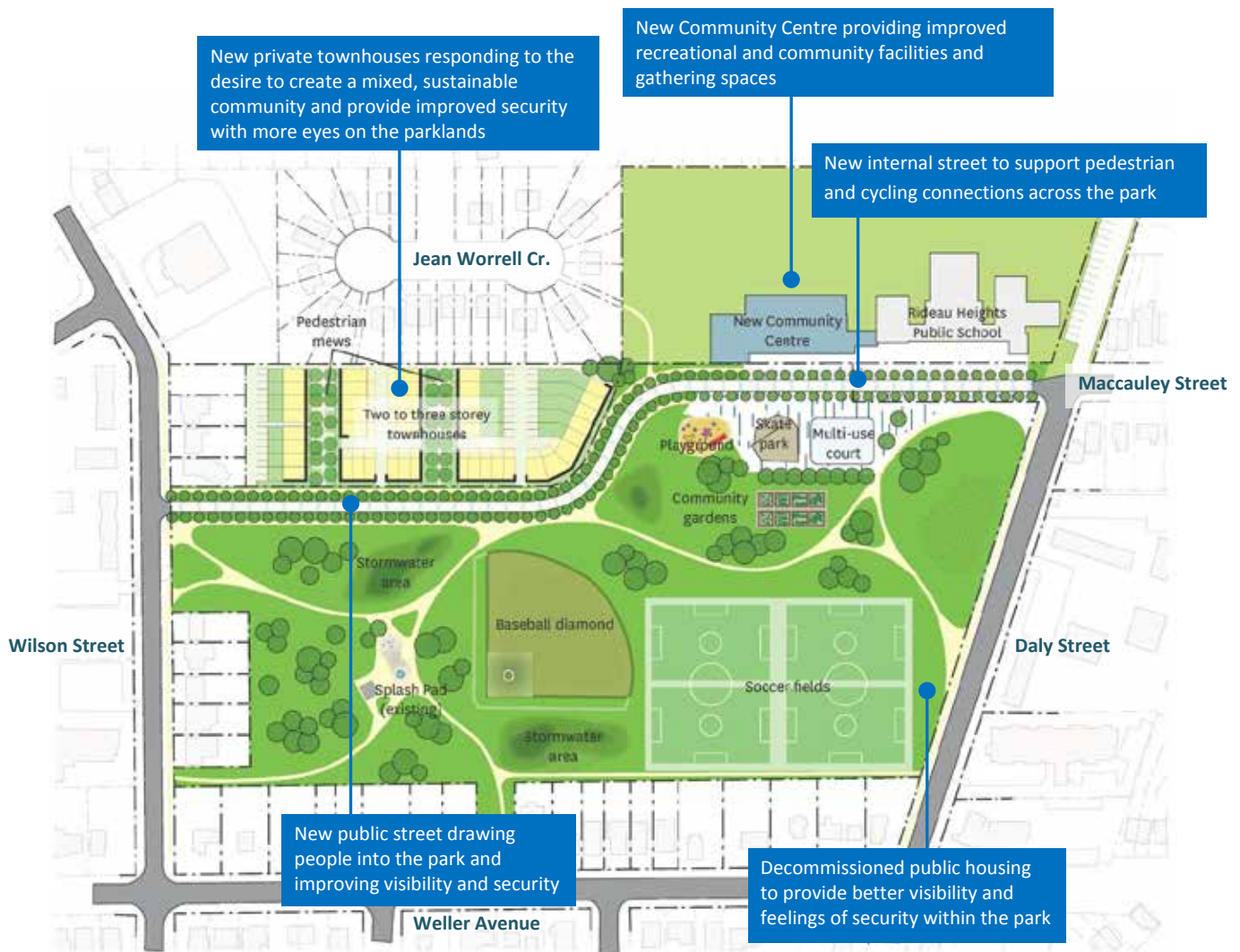
The video is available through FCMHAS and the Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO), and it will be included in the Live and Work section of KEDCO's updated web-site, to be launched in September 2014.

Collaborating to support family engagement

This year the KFL&A Children and Youth Services Planning Committee collaborated on a parent/caregiver outreach and engagement project with three other planning tables from the South East Region. At an organization and system level, family engagement helps ensure that services better meet the needs of those served, bringing perspectives from family experiences that staff members and planners might not have.

In January 2014, a symposium was held to start developing common understandings that could be used to develop strategic family engagement plans at each table, reflecting both family engagement philosophies and practices. Discussion topics ranged from readiness assessments to ways of providing opportunities for meaningful engagement of families at the planning tables. The work also involved looking at ways to support engagement, training, resource development, modeling good family engagement as well as providing opportunities for networking and sharing family engagement practices.

New private townhouses responding to the desire to create a mixed, sustainable community and provide improved security with more eyes on the parklands

New Community Centre providing improved recreational and community facilities and gathering spaces

New internal street to support pedestrian and cycling connections across the park

Jean Worrell Cr.

Pedestrian mews

Two to three storey townhouses

Maccauley Street

New Community Centre

Rideau Heights Public School

Playground

Skate park

Multi-use court

Community gardens

Wilson Street

Stormwater area

Baseball diamond

Splash Pad (existing)

Stormwater area

Soccer fields

Daly Street

New public street drawing people into the park and improving visibility and security

Decommissioned public housing to provide better visibility and feelings of security within the park

Weller Avenue

Above: Conceptual illustration of the approved redevelopment of Shannon Park and new Community Centre facilities – detailed design to occur during the summer and fall of 2014

Rideau Heights Regeneration supports a healthier, safer community

The Rideau Heights Regeneration Project was launched in the summer of 2013 as a priority within the City of Kingston's strategic plan. It aims to improve public housing lands and park spaces in the neighbourhood and help it become a healthier, safe and thriving community. Areas of improvement include parks, pathways, housing, streets and community facilities.

The regeneration involves action to improve safety, provide more activities for kids, make improvements to building quality and lower utility costs, offer better access to recycling programs, and encourage more stores and services to locate nearby.

New Community Centre & Shannon Park Redevelopment

Shannon Park and the Wally Elmer Community Centre are two of the most valued places in Rideau Heights.

• As a community gathering place, Wally Elmer hosts many scheduled programs, drop-in activities, special events, and public skating. The building, however, is at the end of its life cycle.

• Shannon Park contains some of Rideau Heights' most frequented spots including play structures, baseball diamonds, and a modern splash pad. A redesign will make it a safer space and make better use of the site.

Beginning in 2007, neighbourhood organizations and residents engaged with social service providers and the City of Kingston to discuss the need for a new community centre and improvements to the public park spaces. Strong support emerged for the creation of a community hub with improved recreational and social gathering spaces and supporting facilities for the community.

A partnership between the City of Kingston and the Limestone District School Board was created to plan, design, and construct the new centre. This year the City is working with a professional design team and community members to prepare detailed plans to guide the construction and park improvements, which will begin in the spring of 2015.

Moving Forward Together:

The Rideau Heights Regeneration Strategy is the product of a partnership between the City of Kingston, the Kingston & Frontenac Housing Corporation (KFHC), and the residents of the Rideau Heights neighbourhood.

A neighbourhood initiative, proposed by KFL&A Public Health, will address existing barriers and future opportunities to improve physical activity in the built environment. The focus is on the health of the Rideau Heights neighbourhood: it has been noted that lower-income households in Kingston experience poorer health and are more susceptible to experiencing chronic health conditions compared to higher-income households.

Last year the top five caller needs in KFL&A were:

- Income & Financial Assistance (18%)

- Health Services (13%)

- Community Services (9%)

- Municipal Services (9%)

- Individual & Family (6%)

Helping people living in poverty find the services they need

For people in search of services, 211 is a three-digit phone number and website that provides information and referral to community and social services in Ontario.

With information on more than 56,000 agencies and services, it helps KFL&A residents find the answers they need, quickly and easily.
The phone service is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and is available in more than 150 languages. Services are also provided online at www.211ontario.ca — a site that is fully searchable, updated frequently, and available in both English and French versions.

Since 2010, the service has responded to 18,943 calls from KFL&A residents. In 2013 alone, more than 4,000 calls were received, with the vast majority (3,500+) originating from Kingston. About a third of callers were served with specific information; two-thirds received information as well as referrals.

In 2013, the profile of calls received would suggest that service gaps/unmet needs exist in financial aid for dentures; support groups; and needle disposal.

New Online Resource Hub: KingstonHelps.ca

A new initiative, Kingston Helps (http://www.kingstonhelps.ca), offers an online meeting place where all community members can go to access the information they need. Local organizations and community members can come together to share their experiences with poverty and provide information about services and resources that are available in the community. It is a community network and resource hub.

Kingston Helps is dedicated to reducing the impact of poverty on our community and building a strong community where everyone has equal access to the right help, at the right time, from the right people. These easy-to-use online resources help increase awareness of community organizations and services, and how to access them. They strengthen partnerships and help the coordination of efforts among organizations in the community.

Since there are many without a computer or access to the internet, Kingstonhelps.ca has taken the initiative, within the public health organization, to canvas for 'extra' or 'old' computers for 'recycling' to independent agencies and programs throughout the city providing a needed service. By mid-year, it had gathered 14 monitors and computers waiting for distribution to their new homes, including three confirmed for Martha's Table.

Taking Action to End Youth Homelessness

Over the past year, United Way has harnessed the energizing voices of youth for a pilot project, culminating in the launch of Youth Out Loud: Taking Action to End Youth Homelessness in Kingston and Area. The focus has been on mobilizing community capacity, mobilizing assets and strengthening protective/resiliency factors to help youth in the 15-24 age group.

United Way of KFLA and its partners are advancing three key outcomes that will support the larger goal of ending youth homelessness in Kingston and area:

• Strengthen the area's expertise and knowledge about youth homelessness through effective research and knowledge exchange practices.

• Establish collective priorities among youth, social service, government and non-governmental stakeholders to end youth homelessness.

• Strengthen momentum to activate strategies to end youth homelessness.

Key action strategies include:

• Establishing a coordinated system of care wherever a youth or family "touches" the system or moves from one agency to another. A system-wide response is designed to assess and meet the needs of the most vulnerable first. Collective principles and values should guide daily care and support consistent messages across the system. A research system will be created to collect and share local data for ongoing learning and response.

• Developing an integrated prevention framework to remove risk factors for youth becoming homeless in the first place. This includes mechanisms for family counselling and mediation, youth engagement in school, support for mental health programs, programs for employment and career readiness, discharge planning, and promoting community awareness of youth homelessness issues.

• Matching youth housing options with their transition to independence, enhancing support through emergency housing services, transitional housing, and Housing First options with access to affordable housing units. Immediate, flexible case management with follow-up support is also a key objective.

The Plan is available at www.unitedwaykfla.ca

- 766 new housing permits were issued in 2013 (up from 615 in 2012)

- The number of individuals and families waiting for social housing (on the Social Housing Registry) dropped to 1,110 in 2013 from 1,176 a year earlier.

- The 2013 Homelessness Point-in-Time Count found Kingston's homelessness rate to be 8.59 persons per 10,000 — about the same as the Canadian average at 8.57.

- A County of Frontenac Homelessness Survey showed 42 people were homeless on any given night.

- 864 individuals used shelters in 2013 (up from 818 in 2012). This year, the City and County initiated a Housing First policy approach to help end chronic homelessness and reduce the need for shelter beds.

- 31 people took advantage of the Kingston Frontenacs Renovates program that helps people remain in their homes by providing financial assistance for urgent upgrades.

- Secondary Suites Program: 12 permits for suites were issued in 2013, which helps to create more affordable housing options.

- Under the Affordable Housing Capital Investment Program, 10 units were created on Canatara Court, and funding was committed for another seven.

Housing Availability Improves

Growth in the housing supply over the past year – particularly in multi-residential units – has stimulated changes in the market for housing.

Of particular significance is the increase in apartment vacancy rate, which went from 1.7% in 2012 (close to the lowest in Canada) up to 2.3% in 2013 — still below the 3% figure considered to be ideal, but improving. This means apartments and more affordable housing are becoming easier for renters to find. Rents, however, continued to rise in line with the Ontario Rent Guideline.

The significant growth in 2013 was in the development of new apartment units: 469 construction permits were issued in 2013 (compared to just 315 permits in 2012).

A recent report to City Council indicated that, as of the end of December 2013, a total of 1,906 multi-residential units (including both apartments and condos) were going through the approval process. Recently, applications have been received for about 500 multi-residential units in the Williamsville district and downtown. It is anticipated that a number of these units will be built within the next 2-3 years.

Overall these significant developments mean the community can anticipate that the vacancy rate will continue to rise. It could also have a potential impact on rent levels as the market becomes more competitive.

Homelessness Plan initiates & guides emergency shelter restructuring

The City of Kingston achieved a major milestone in 2013 when it completed its 10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan, and implementation began this year.

This guiding document takes aim at ways to end homelessness in Kingston over the next decade with a "Housing First" approach and rapidly re-housing homeless people. As part of the implementation, the City will restructure the emergency shelter system.

"The goal is to get people out of shelters and into homes quickly," says Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner of Community Services. The focus on "housing first" means fewer shelter spots will be needed and municipal resources must be shifted to reflect the new focus and its impact. Homeless clients with the highest needs will receive intensive support to find and stay in supported housing.

The City will restructure the emergency shelter system in the second phase of its 10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan, which calls for:

• The re-allocation of provincial and municipal homelessness funding so that it's re-aligned in support the Rapid Re-housing/Housing First program.

• A reduction in emergency shelter-beds funded, from 74 to 70, by July 1, 2015. This reduction is based on a detailed analysis of daily shelter bed usage at the city's six emergency shelters in 2012 and 2013.

• Seeking parties to manage four Housing Assistance/Emergency Shelter Centres — a 25-bed Adult co-ed shelter; 15-bed Family shelter; 15-bed Youth shelter; and 15-bed overflow shelter.

The three specialized Housing Assistance/Emergency Shelter Programs will operate as shelters and offer housing support. When necessary, these shelters will be supplemented by the 15-bed overflow shelter and the use of a motel voucher system and other programs for emergency bedding.

The City expects to be able to reduce capacity by an additional five beds, in steps, until stabilizing at 55 funded beds sometime in 2017 (and closing the overflow shelter if feasible).

"The goal is to get people out of shelters and into homes quickly."

— Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner of Community Services

The KFL&A Food Charter celebrates and champions nourishment for all. It imagines the region having healthy, food-secure communities where:

- food is recognized as a basic right,

- a just food system ensures all members of our community have access to adequate, nutritious, safe, affordable and culturally appropriate food,

- an ecologically and economically sustainable food system thrives, and

- a strong relationship exists between our rural and urban communities, which advocates and supports our local food system.

New Food Policy Council begins assessment of area food system

A safe, reliable, local and sustainable food supply is an essential component for healthy communities. Following up on initial work to develop a KFL&A Food Charter, a new KFL&A Food Policy Council (FPC) was launched in 2013 to help create a more secure and sustainable community food system, especially through its policy work, with the following purposes:

- To serve as a forum for discussing food issues;

- To assess the community food system in KFL&A;

- To inform and influence food and food related policies and programs

In the course of its work, the KFL&A Food Policy Council will foster coordination between sectors in the food system. It will also provide education and overall guidance on community food system solutions for government, institutions, agencies, businesses and the public.

The 14-member FPC has begun assessment of the food system in KFL&A and evaluation of existing food-related policies and practices in order to create a more secure and sustainable community food system. It will be launching a website this year to inform the community about food policy initiatives, and is planning a "celebration of food" event in fall 2014.

Point in Time Count: Food Assistance

In 2014, a Point-in-Time Count was conducted to estimate the use of emergency food services in Kingston on a single day. Once again this year, 27 agencies participated in this count, reporting on 51 distinct programs.

- 1,185 meals were served to people through shelters, meal programs and other agencies.

- 336 individuals received food hampers from local food banks and pantries.

- From September through April, the Food Sharing Project served a total of 785,374 breakfasts, snacks or lunches, feeding 12,921 individual children. The daily average in April (which compares with the single-day point-in-time count for other food assistance programs) was 1,923 meals (breakfasts or lunches) served to students in local schools.

- Food providers note an increase in usage by seniors, families, youth and young adults, particularly those without family support.

Looking Ahead:
Focus on Child Poverty and Employment Plans

Over the past few years, much has been achieved on many fronts by the community and by the many volunteers who have been involved in the Poverty Reduction Initiative and its working groups. Major strides forward have also been achieved in a couple of areas of particular focus and priority, such as housing.

Looking ahead to the next stage of effort, strategic focus will be placed on two particular priorities in Kingston: Child Poverty, and Employment & Skills Development. Our goals are ambitious, but we know we will accomplish them, going farther with clear focus and together as a community. For poverty is everybody's business.

In Kingston, **4,420 children** (17 years and under) live in low-income households.

47% of Canadians live from paycheque to paycheque.

poverty
reduction initiative

For more information on the
Poverty Reduction Initiative, visit:

www.wecanreducepoverty.ca

United Way
Kingston, Frontenac
Lennox and Addington

KINGSTON

KCHC
Kingston Community
Health Centres