

Vital Signs in the Bowness Community

October 21, 2009 – Calgary, Alberta – Bowness Vital Signs - ‘Voices of Bowness’ is the first community report of its kind in Canada; it looks at the strengths and challenges of the vibrant and distinct community of Bowness, Calgary.

Inspired by Calgary’s Vital Signs Report, Voices of Bowness highlights the areas the community feels are strong and recognizes the changes that need to happen in the future. The project received more than 500 responses to the survey that was conducted online, door-to-door, and in several drop-in places in the neighbourhood.

“Bowness Vital Signs gave us a chance to look at the neighbourhood and see how we can all help make it better,” says Cesar Cala, Lead Strategist for neighbourhoods programming at United Way of Calgary and Area.

“We learned a lot of great things about Bowness; it has a strong sense of community, almost every resident we heard from said they are attached to the community – on the other hand we know there could be some improvements,” he says.

Highlights from the report include:

- Bowness has a fairly diverse population with six per cent Aboriginal, 14 per cent immigrants, and another five per cent that are a visible minority
- Looking at residents over the age of 15; 29 per cent have a high school diploma, 15 per cent have a college degree, and 12 per cent have a university degree
- More than 25 per cent of residents in Bowness live in low-income households compared to the citywide average of 14.2 per cent
- The median household income in Bowness is \$45,790, which is 47 per cent lower than the median household income for Calgary of \$67, 238

The responses from the surveys were collected and evaluated – vital actions have been suggested from the responses.

“Our next steps will be to work with the community on the vital actions that were suggested in the report. Some of those actions are increasing cultural opportunities, dealing with graffiti, and working to get drugs off the streets,” says Cala.

Andreas Brunthaler is a long-time resident in the area; he was a volunteer in the Bowness Vital Signs initiative. He went door-to-door asking residents what they thought about the community and also volunteered his photography skills for the pictures in the report.

“To make our community better we needed to take a good look at what we should be doing. Almost every bit of feedback we got was positive. People love Bowness – I love Bowness,” says Andreas Brunthaler.

Bowness Vital Signs is an initiative of the Bowness Community Association and supported by United Way of Calgary and Area, The Calgary Foundation, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary, Bowwest Community Resource Centre, and The City of Calgary

For more information, and to see the full report check out www.calgaryunitedway.org

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