

# Update

SPRING/SUMMER 2003

The Newsletter of Ontario's Healthy Communities



## SUDBURY'S SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES

By Monique Beaudoin



55+ participants attended the workshop "Implementing Healthy Communities Principles in the City of Greater Sudbury" in November 2002

In the fall of 2001, OHCC's *Update* featured a story on the City of Greater Sudbury and their efforts to engage citizens in a newly amalgamated local government. At that time, City Council had just been presented with the *Mayor's Task Force on Citizen Involvement and Volunteerism*, led by Co-chairs

*Continued on page 5*

## CONNECTING SMART GROWTH WITH HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

By Chris Winters, Executive Director of Conservation Council of Ontario

Those of us who have been active in the healthy communities movement over the past 20 years are well aware of the impact of urban sprawl on community design and livability. Simply put, low density sprawl means more cars, less public transit, fewer pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods, insufficient demand for neighbourhood stores and a local economy, poorer air quality, less green space and higher servicing costs.

It's time to speak up for healthy community planning in Ontario! The Ontario government is in the process of developing a set of 30-year strategies called "Smart Growth" modelled after similar initiatives in the United States.

Five regional panels have been established, and one of them (the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel) has released a discussion paper that maps out a vision and strategic directions for the region. The panel calls for a comprehensive Smart

Growth plan that will address five key areas:

1. Reshaping where we live (urban redevelopment)
2. Unlocking gridlock
3. Rethinking how we manage waste
4. Optimizing our infrastructure
5. Protecting our environment

The other regions are engaged in similar consultation exercises. You can find out the status for your region via the provincial Smart Growth website [www.smartgrowth.gov.on.ca](http://www.smartgrowth.gov.on.ca).

### Community Action for Responsible Development

We are at a critical point in the healthy communities movement. The urban development we create over the next 30 years will be with us for centuries to come. The mistakes we make now will be the costs that

*Continued on page 8*

**INSIDE: 3/EcoAction Teams 4/Kids Voting Canada 7/Updated Community Animator Contact Info**

Visit our new web site at: [www.healthycommunities.on.ca](http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca)

*Update* is the newsletter of the  
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CANADA M5V 3B1

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**Update** is the newsletter of Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition

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This document is prepared in part with funds provided by the Province of Ontario. The information contained herein reflects solely the views of OHCC and is not officially endorsed by the Province of Ontario.

**Thank you to our funders:**  
Ontario Ministry of Health and  
Long Term Care  
Ontario Trillium Foundation

# Communities and local governments: Working Together

By Lorna Heidenheim

While many of the forces that shape our lives today are global in nature, it is at the local government level that many of the policies and programs that most directly affect our well-being are made. Emergency services, social services, housing and waste management are only some of the important factors in our health that are heavily influenced by local government.

It is also at the local government level that community members are most engaged in the democratic process. Irrespective of poor voter turnout – usually around 40% – local governments provide for greater access to politicians, more public accountability, public/private/community partnerships and involvement of citizens in the governance process through local boards, councils and advisory committees.

The municipal landscape in Ontario has changed dramatically in the last few years. Amalgamations have reduced the number of municipalities by almost half since 1996, and municipal and provincial government responsibilities have been realigned, leaving many people feeling disconnected from their local governments.

In the face of these new challenges, 36 municipalities have adopted a Healthy Communities approach framework as a means of bringing people together to create a collective vision, analyze current issues and develop action plans. Some have formed inter-departmental committees to develop and implement healthy community strategies

consistently throughout all city programs, services and administration.

In many planning processes, it often seems that the public consultation process provides for only a token involvement of citizens. The Healthy Communities approach brings diverse community participation in community planning and decision-making, not only in terms of municipal services and policies, but in all community organizations and political bodies.

By involving the community in local governance, municipal councillors and staff gain access to the experience, knowledge and expertise within the community. Participating community members become more knowledgeable about community issues and affairs, increase their awareness of resources and opportunities and have a greater influence to ensure their values are reflected in municipal decision-making.

To help communities and local governments work collaboratively to create healthy communities, OHCC has released an updated *Communities and Local Governments: Working Together*. This manual attempts to give a clear understanding of what local governments do, how they work, and provide some strategies for communities and their local government to work together effectively.

To order this valuable resource contact us at (416) 408-4841 or [info@healthycommunities.on.ca](mailto:info@healthycommunities.on.ca).



## OHCC PARTNERS WITH EARTH DAY CANADA ON ECOACTION TEAMS PROGRAM

The EcoAction Teams Program is a new, neighbourhood-based initiative developed by Earth Day Canada (EDC), designed to teach the fundamental “how-tos” of household energy and resource conservation, waste reduction and alternative energy options. The initiative recognizes that community groups and individuals accomplish some of the most significant environmental work at the local level. As a result, the program seeks to reduce human impact on the environment by helping ordinary Canadians achieve the lifestyle changes that need to be made if we are to be successful in creating a truly sustainable world.

Between January and July 2003, the Community Animation Team of the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition will collaborate with Earth Day Canada to establish and support 20 EcoAction teams from communities across Ontario.

Participants in the EcoAction Team program will gain practical skills to allow them to reduce the size of their ecological footprint and save on their household expenses year after year. The program will provide educational resources that outline simple actions participants can implement in their homes and daily lives. Web-based tools will track team members’ achievements and financial savings.

Additionally, team members will have an opportunity to share their experiences and results in a collaborative and supportive environment. EcoAction Team members will meet regularly for 6

months and document their activities via the EcoAction web site.

Participants will also have the opportunity to receive facilitation training and take turns leading team meetings. An EcoAction Team Facilitator, provided by the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, will serve as an experienced resource at initial meetings and will make her or himself available by telephone or e-mail to discuss questions participants have as they implement the program in their homes. Team members will also assist EDC in recruiting new participants to take part in this exciting initiative in future years.

### EcoAction Teams Participant Information

Communities from across Ontario are invited to participate in the pilot phase of the project. The first group of EcoAction Teams undertook program activities starting in February 2003.

Neighbourhood-based EcoAction Teams of 6-12 people will:

- Implement in their homes the simple actions outlined in the five activity guides (Energy, Water, Transportation, Waste and Food, Garden and Smart Consumers) provided by EcoAction Teams
- Share their experiences and results with each other at team meetings
- Input information about their activities into the interactive EcoAction web site that will measure team members’

progress and financial savings

- Learn practical skills to allow them to reduce the size of their ecological footprint
- Share their success with their neighbours
- Participate in the pilot phase of an exciting new project designed to foster community pride and environmental citizenship
- Agree to meet as a team 4-6 times between February and July 2003
- Save on their household expenses year after year
- Have access to a computer with web capabilities
- Provide feedback (e.g. questionnaires, phone interview) to assist Earth Day Canada to evaluate the project
- Assist with the recruitment of future EcoAction Teams in their community

### For more information contact:

Carol Lynn Wallace,  
Program Manager (ext. 113) or  
Farrah Byckalo-Khan, Program  
Coordinator (ext. 106)

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500-296 Richmond Street West  
Toronto, ON M5V 1X2  
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E-mail: [info@ecoactionteams.ca](mailto:info@ecoactionteams.ca)

# FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS CAMPAIGNING AGAINST URBAN SPRAWL

The Federation of Ontario Naturalists are taking action against urban sprawl. They are providing workshops in various locations around the province and are distributing copies of their book, *A Smart Future for Ontario: How to Protect Nature and Curb Urban Sprawl in Your Community*. The book explains sprawl and provides a chapter of tips on how to create smarter and more compact cities. You can download it in PDF format from their website,

[www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org), or you can purchase a hard copy for \$8.00. They are also hosting a Smart Growth discussion forum on their website.

The Green Door Alliance, a Toronto area environmental group, describes urban sprawl as “low density development... which separates where people live from where they shop, work and recreate, thus requiring cars to drive between zones” (Geigen-Mille, London Free Press, Feb 23, 2003) In addition to the

pollution caused by excessive vehicle use, urban sprawl consumes prime agricultural land and destroys wetlands and other natural wildlife habitats. Low density housing also makes it more expensive to provide municipal services, including public transportation, which leads again to increased use of private motor vehicles.

For more information about the Federation of Ontario Naturalists see [www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org)



## Kids Voting Canada: New Initiative Gives High School Students Political Voice

Kids Voting Canada and the “Youth Vote 2003” program, created for the upcoming Ontario provincial election, is aimed at building a habit of electoral participation within students of grades 9-12. The model for this program has been adapted from a very successful organization in the U.S., Kids Voting USA ([www.kidsvotingusa.org](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org)). Reports indicate:

- Increases in adult voter participation of 5-10% caused by the ‘trickle up’ effect;
- Doubling of student newspaper readership and knowledge of media’s role in the political process;
- Gender gaps and socio-economic gaps closed by raising interest and participation across genders and economic levels within the classroom.

Participating teachers will voluntarily instruct the ‘Youth Vote 2003’ curriculum supplement Election Packages, written by practicing high school teachers, and discuss local issues and candidates. They will be supported by a province-wide website and local media. Prior to Election Day, school team leaders will receive ballots and ballot boxes and coordinate a student voters list within each school.

On Election Day morning, students in grades 9-12 will vote on candidates in their local ridings. On Election Night, after official polls close and before official results are in, students and the Ontario public will see ‘Youth Vote 2003’ results presented live. CBC has confirmed their role as the province-wide television partner on Election Night.

Kids Voting Canada will provide a non-partisan structure for an exercise that already occurs in many

classrooms across the province during election time, making the process transparent and visible for both parents and the public. The supplementary campaign unit designed to support the curriculum will be available to the public on the Kids Voting Canada website, facilitating our goal of transparency.

Kids Voting Canada is working with service organizations across Ontario to promote the program to their local schools and to assist schools by providing volunteer Returning Officers on Election Day. For information on how your community can get involved in this program contact:

Taylor Gunn, Chief Election Officer  
Kids Voting Canada  
(416) 925-0308  
Toll free (866) 488-8775  
E-mail: [taylorgunn@kidsvotingcanada.com](mailto:taylorgunn@kidsvotingcanada.com)

## Sudbury Implementing Healthy Community Principles

Gary Michalak, and Deputy Mayor David Courtemanche, two important Healthy Community champions.

Since then, the community has gone on to establish a Healthy Community Working Group. This group is composed of representatives from key community organizations, including the City of Greater Sudbury; the Sudbury and District Health Unit; the Sudbury Roundtable on Health, Economy and the Environment; the Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury; Laurentian University; and the Sudbury and District Chamber of Commerce. The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition has been actively involved in supporting this process as well.

In November of 2002, over 55 citizens from business, labour, the environment, social agencies, health, multicultural agencies, the francophone community and the city participated in a consultation process with the Working Group. A number of directions were highlighted, and a recommendation was given to continue in this process of implementing a Healthy Communities framework for Greater Sudbury, including the development of *Community Action Networks*.

### **A Vehicle for Citizen Involvement**

A Community Action Network is a group of neighbours who meet regularly to act on projects, discuss issues, and communicate with their local government representatives. It is a problem-solving mechanism, one that strives to address the need for citizen engagement in local

government decision-making processes. There are currently three Community Action Networks in Greater Sudbury, and the goal is to have one in every ward by February of 2004.

In November of 2002, Council also approved the preparation of a Healthy Communities strategy as part of the City's Official Plan. Through a community consultation process, this project will look at healthy community policies that are suitable for inclusion in the new Official Plan, as well as an implementation plan to put those policies to work.

The Community Action Networks will offer one of several important vehicles to engage the citizens in this Official Plan process.

According to David Courtemanche, Deputy Mayor of the City of Greater Sudbury, "Community Action Networks or CAN's are actually becoming a part of Council's normal language. Imagine sitting in a Council Chamber and hearing councillors pepper their discussions with references to CAN's as they debate critical issues such as budgets and facilities. It is a strong indicator that there is a willingness to change the way the City engages its citizens."

In recognition of the energy and enthusiasm generated in the community for implementing Healthy Community principles, Council put their support behind the Healthy Communities Working Group and at their February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, adopted a resolution to support the initiative by

establishing a one-year contract position at the City of Sudbury to co-ordinate and support the three existing Community Action Networks and to facilitate the creation of three additional networks. Council allocated \$75,000 to this process, in addition to another \$45,000 that had been previously allocated to the Working Group through the Official Planning budget, and which the Working Group will

utilize to develop a healthy community strategy for the new Official Plan.

There are

many challenges in a project such as this. Again, Deputy Mayor Courtemanche: "It is critical that the first experience working in a CAN is a positive one for politicians, citizens and staff. Year one is somewhat of an experiment in community leadership. When CAN's recognize in themselves, that they are a breeding ground for nurturing the leadership capacity of a neighbourhood or community, I believe that the real potential for what they can accomplish will become unlimited."

Citizen involvement in decision-making processes is an important determinant of health, as are social and environmental determinants. By establishing Community Action Networks, Greater Sudbury is striving to address this issue, and ensure that its citizens' voices are heard and reflected in the decisions of their local government.

*Sudbury's City Council allocated an additional \$75,000 to its Healthy Communities Working Group, bringing the city's total financial commitment to \$120,000.*



## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

### Health Promotion Summer School

The Centre for Health Promotion at the University of Toronto, in partnership with Aboriginal and Francophone provincial service organizations, is sponsoring the 10th Annual Health Promotion Summer School.

From June 23-26, participants will engage in an interactive learning experience where multiple perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, on community mobilization and building healthy public policy will be explored in depth, fostering dialogue, collaboration and innovative solutions to current health promotion challenges. Lectures, application toolboxes and networking opportunities will engage health practitioners, policy-makers and managers alike.

Also included this year is an introductory course (Preschool) in

Health Promotion that will be held June 22.

Registration is open until June 1 at a cost of \$450 for Summer School and \$100 for Preschool. For further information, please visit [www.utoronto.ca/chp/hpss](http://www.utoronto.ca/chp/hpss) or contact Lisa Weintraub at (416) 469-4632, [hpss@rogers.com](mailto:hpss@rogers.com).

### Thunder Bay Recreational Trails Alliance

Bicycle commuting and trail enthusiasts recently met to explore the possibility of forming the Thunder Bay Recreational Trails Alliance. About 24 groups with 40 individuals came out to a meeting at Confederation College chaired by Doug Smith of the Thunder Bay Recreational Trails Association. Groups represented self propelled and snowmobile interests. Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition Community Animator, Paul Filteau, served as the communications contact and recorder. The Trails Alliance will fall under Fast Forward, a community development initiative sponsored by Thunder Bay Ventures and the City of Thunder Bay.

A follow up meeting facilitated by Marg Wanlin of Fast Forward explored strengths, weaknesses, goals and priorities of a trails alliance. The big challenge will be to see whether there is common ground among self propelled and snowmobile trail advocates.

### Design Workshops Explore Principles of Health and Tourism Promotion

On December 16, 2002 and February 3, 2003, Design for Health and Tourism workshops were facilitated by OHCC Community Animator Paul Filteau in the Northwestern Ontario communities of Rainy River and Ear Falls, respectively.

The groups explored how and why promotional tools attract attention, as well as practical examples of where their newly acquired graphic knowledge could be used. Design and healthy community concepts in planning were incorporated into visual exercises. Design examples of health promotion media such as banners, newsletters, posters, websites, folders, etc. were explored with students in Rainy River. The group completed striking banners and placemats to illustrate healthy and safe communities.

Both groups exhibited considerable originality in their exploration of design principles relating to health and tourism development, and some of the participants displayed unique graphic solutions in presenting their creations.

Heidi Ivall of Rainy River Northwest Health Unit, OHCC, Rainy River High School and Geoff McClain of Ear Falls 2000 hosted the workshops.

Since the completion of its tourism study, Ear Falls 2000 has undertaken community marketing strategies such as the creation of a new logo that emphasizes the waterfalls and their eagle mascot.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### Staff comings and goings...

Congratulations to Tricia Green, our Administrative Co-

ordinator on the birth of her daughter Makeda in November. Tricia will be on leave from OHCC until January 2004.

Reluctantly we said goodbye to Valerie Gennings who left OHCC on April 30, and wished her well.

Many thanks to Shamima Rahman for her administrative help. Shamima was a student of the Scarborough Centre for Alternative Education on

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placement with OHCC from October 2002 to January 2003.

James Brandon, Conference Co-ordinator, tied up all the loose ends of our 2002 Conference and departed from OHCC on January 31. We all appreciated James' hard work and unfailing good humour.

Raisa Jari, our E-Strategy Co-ordinator, completed her contract with OHCC on March 31. She did a great job of re-designing and updating both our English and French websites.

Welcome to Andrew Koch, our new Program Support Staff, who will be undertaking a combination of administrative and program-related tasks. Andrew is working Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

We are pleased to have John Wilson, a Master of Social Work student from Wilfrid Laurier, on placement with us from January to June. John will be working primarily on our Diverse and Inclusive Communities project.

Sumitra Mutharajah, from the Scarborough Centre for Alternative Education, will also be on placement with us to assist with office administration until June 30,

A very special hello to Kerri Jones, who has volunteered her extensive communications skills and experience to co-ordinate the production of our newsletter.

Kara Symbolic and Jeff Kohl our East Community Animators will be taking a leave of absence from June 1 – December 31, 2003.

Susan Larsh, our Central East Community Animator, will be taking a leave of absence from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004.

### Changes to OHCC Community Animator Program

OHCC employs Community Animators in various locations throughout the province to support community groups, organizations and coalitions that are working to improve

the social, economic and environmental well-being of their communities.

Community Animators have to cover geographically large regions, so are unable to provide on-going support or be involved on a continuous basis with any one group, organization or coalition. Rather, as the title "Community Animator" suggests, their role is to act as a catalyst within communities - they provide information and consultation, link groups with others that are involved in similar activities, facilitate planning sessions, identify potential resources and perhaps suggest some new ideas and strategies. The OHCC Community Animation Team has been re-organized as follows, effective May 1, 2003.

### OHCC 2003 Conference and AGM

Wednesday May 21 and Thursday May 22

Fanshawe College, London

An exciting solutions-based conference was presented by the South Western Ontario Community Development Network. "House This" focused on homelessness and affordable housing, with activists and community workers from the grassroots to the national levels presenting what has been tried and what has actually worked in other municipalities. Keynote speaker Avi Freidman developed the graduate program in Affordable Housing at McGill University's School of Architecture and has won numerous

*Continued on Page 8*

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Continued from Page 1

## Smart Growth and Community Planning

future generations will bear. But they will thank us if we are successful in preserving Ontario's natural features and prime agricultural land. They will thank us if they inherit energy and resource-efficient, people-centred communities.

Take the protection of farmland for example. A recent study for the Neptis Foundation estimates that, under a business-as-usual scenario, an additional 181,000 acres of the best farmland in Canada will be lost in Central Ontario over the next 30 years. That's an area bigger than the megacity of Toronto! Much of this development will take place on land that is already zoned as urban, and yet the Greater Toronto Homebuilders' Association says it will

run out of available greenfields by 2017. The pressure to open up new farmland for development is immense.

If we are going to design for compact, healthy communities, public involvement in the planning process is critical. There's an excellent resource book now available from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists called "A Smart Future for Ontario: How to Protect Nature and Curb Urban Sprawl in Your Community." The guide provides citizens and local groups with tips on organizing and participating in the planning process.

At the provincial level, the Pembina Institute has completed a detailed review of provincial planning and urban development policy, "Smart Growth in Ontario: The Promise Vs. Provincial Performance." Pembina concludes that unless Ontario shifts its policies in ways that will promote urban sustainability, it will perpetuate

a "mutually reinforcing pattern of losses of prime farmland and ecologically significant areas, increased congestion and reduced efficiency, worsening air quality," etc.

Other campaigns and projects are under development, and it's a good idea to check the Conservation Council of Ontario's website for the latest links to Smart Growth resources. See [www.greenontario.org](http://www.greenontario.org) for details.

The Conservation Council has also established an informal Smart Growth Network of like-minded organizations. If you are interested in joining the list, please drop us a line at [cco@web.ca](mailto:cco@web.ca). After all, Ontario's healthy communities have been at the forefront of Smart Growth for some time now.

*The Conservation Council of Ontario was a founding member of OHCC.*

Continued from Page 7

international awards for his work in community rejuvenation. Amanda Gryzb, a former New York City housing activist now lecturing in media studies at the University of Western Ontario;

- Michel Labbé, President of Options for Homes;
- Michael Shapcott, Co-chair of the National Housing and Homelessness Network;
- Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty;
- Action Family, a London-based activist collective; workers from rural homeless youth projects in Huron and Perth Counties.

The OHCC Annual General Meeting was held on May 22, 11:30 - 12:00 in Room R1042, following a Community Forum. For more information, contact us at [info@healthycommunities.on.ca](mailto:info@healthycommunities.on.ca).

## A New Resource Guide for Health Care Providers: Building Bridges Across Difference and Disability

People with facial and physical differences and/or disabilities frequently encounter challenges in being active partners in their health care because of limited understanding and validation of their experiences of living with physical differences and/or disabilities. ***Building Bridges Across Difference and Disability*** was written for health care providers to assist in enhancing comfort and competency by:

1. Providing insight into how people experience health care interactions and;
2. Increasing health care providers' knowledge and skills.

Practical suggestions in this resource guide will support your communication, your approach,

and your sensitivity to boundaries in interactions with people with physical differences and/or disabilities. This resource guide has been made available through the support of the New Ontario Trillium Foundation, who funded our three-year partnership project between AboutFace International and the Disability and Physical Differences Initiative of the Body Image Project at the Regional Women's Health Centre, Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre.

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