

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction wins David Crombie Award

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Toronto, Ontario – The community of Hamilton took on one of the most complex challenges facing every Canadian community – poverty – and working collaboratively with its citizens and hundreds of local organizations, it has started to turn things around, attracting the admiration of cities across the country and winning the Canadian Urban Institute's (CUI) 2009 David Crombie Award.

"Named after one of Ontario's most loved leaders, the annual David Crombie Award goes to those people or initiatives that work collaboratively on solutions for complex problems that face Canada's largest urban region – the Greater Golden Horseshoe. By tackling poverty and making a difference the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction has taught us all a lesson that is respected far beyond the Golden Horseshoe," said CUI President and CEO Glen Murray.

"Where most communities only see poverty increasing, Hamilton has made Herculean efforts in not just slowing poverty but reducing it by almost two percent in less than a decade," said Murray.

About 500 elite members of Canada's who's who of city building will gather in Toronto on June 5 at the Royal York Hotel to honour The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (<http://www.hamiltonpoverty.ca/>) as well as 17 other groups and individuals (www.canurb.com/awards/ula/leadershipawards2009.php) across the country who are making Canadian cities exciting and dynamic places to live and work.

In 2001, Hamilton had one of the highest rates of poverty in Ontario with 20 per cent of residents living below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) and one in four children under age 14 were growing up in those households. A roundtable was convened by the City of Hamilton and Hamilton Community Foundation to address the issue and it attracted business, government leaders, not-for-profit sector, educators, people living in poverty, neighbourhood activities, philanthropists and other local leaders to take up the challenge to make "Hamilton the best place to raise a child."

"What is unique about the Hamilton Roundtable is that we have engaged representation from all sectors of the community including people who live with poverty," said Mark Chamberlain, Chair of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction and President and CEO of Trivaris. "Working collaboratively with other organizations is only part of the solution. We have taken a creative approach and have engaged more than 900 partners in this challenge. It is through these unique partnerships, that the Roundtable has built individual solutions at the community level, while focusing on changing the policies and systems at the higher level which keep children and their families living in poverty."

"As the David Crombie award recognizes the work done in a collaborative and innovative fashion for solutions to complex problems in large urban regions, I commend the selection committee on awarding the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction for this year's award," said Mayor Fred Eisenberger. "People may not realize that poverty and prosperity are linked. By focusing on poverty reduction we are focusing on improving the prosperity for the whole community," he added. "If individuals cannot contribute because of poverty keeping them down, what we are losing is human potential which is vital for success. The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction constantly works to ensure our community has stable human capital, human dignity and overall community well being. Our City vision also supports this principle as we strive to be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities."

The Urban Leadership Awards (ULA) Program honours Canadian individuals, groups and organizations that have made significant contributions to improving the quality of life in Canada's cities and urban regions. The 2009 ULA's have been made possible by the generous support of a variety of corporate sponsors including Gold Sponsors Loblaw Properties Ltd., Scotiabank, TD Bank Financial Group, the Ontario Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, Environics, the City of Toronto, GE Canada and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Community Builder Sponsors include Toronto Hydro, Local 27 of the Union of Carpenters and Allied Workers, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life Assurance Companies.

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The judges for this year's awards included Canadians who have dedicated their lives to public service and who have detailed knowledge of the local stories and triumphs of Canadians in their home communities. Under the chairmanship of the Hon. David Crombie, the committee included; Al Duerr, former Mayor of Calgary; Newfoundland's Dr. Linda Inkpen; Dr. Antonia Maioni, Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada; John Kim Bell, founder of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation; Ms. Mitzie Hunter, a Vice President at Goodwill Industries; and, Dr. Nola Kate Seymoar, President and CEO, International Centre for Sustainable Cities, based in British Columbia.

The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in urban areas across Canada and throughout the world.

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Community Impacts of Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

**Just a few of the "change indicators" the Hamilton Roundtable
and its many partners use to benchmark its success.**

- 2008 Stats Canada census indicates LICO has decreased to 18.1 from 20 percent.
- City of Hamilton returned approximately \$2M in 2007 (\$1M in 2006) to 6,500 low-income families through the municipal portion of the National Child Benefit.
- About 900 Hamilton organizations and businesses are linked through HRPR resulting in new health services, new early years programs, school based programs, mentoring supports for at-risk youth, employment for new immigrants, home ownership and affordable housing programs.
- The creation by the City of Hamilton of an innovative employment initiative Hamilton Hires and the creation of Affordable Transit Pass Pilot Project for low income wage earners.
- Direct influence on the Ontario Poverty Strategy created in consultations and meetings with Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services.
- Twenty new childcare spaces for Aboriginal children and a New Early Years Centre developed to support the Aboriginal community.
- Seven neighbourhood service provider teams developed and aligned with Ontario Early Years Centres.
- More than 2,200 backpacks with school supplies were donated to school children in need, representing a community donation of \$225,000.
- Creation of new youth engagement groups - Hamilton Youth Voice Against Poverty and Youth Engagement and Action.