

PENTICTON'S

2011

**VitalSigns®**



**11 Issue Areas**

**Voices of  
Citizen Graders**

**a portrait of our community**

## Contents

Message from the Chair | 2

2011 Report Highlights | 3

Our Process | 3

How to Read This Report | 4

## Issue Areas

Learning | 5

Health & Wellness | 6

Arts & Culture | 7

Belonging & Leadership | 8

Safety | 9

Getting Around | 10

Environment | 11

Getting Started | 12

Housing | 13

Gap Between Rich & Poor | 14

Work | 15

Acknowledgements | 16

Sponsors | 16

## Message from the Chair and President

The Community Foundation of the South Okanagan has been a vital part of helping people give back to their communities for 20 years. Through our stewardship of gifts from citizens and organizations, we have been able to grant over \$875,000 in our history to meet a variety of community needs.

A strong community is a reflection not only of its past but also its future. In anticipation of what may lay ahead for our communities, the Board of the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan made the decision to participate in Vital Signs®, a program of the Community Foundations of Canada, the national membership organization for more than 170 community foundations across the country.

Vital Signs® is an annual community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our community, identifies issues and trends, and provides citizens with an opportunity to assign grades in a range of areas critical to our quality of life. It is this local focus that gives Vital Signs® its power.

The Community Foundation of the South Okanagan is very proud to present the first Vital Signs® report for Penticton. Our hope is that this report will help inform and guide not only the decisions we make as a Foundation, but those of individuals and other organizations working in support of our community's well being.

This Vital Signs® report could not have been completed without the dedicated effort of our Vital Signs® Committee, the Community Leadership Team, and the more than 650 Penticton citizens that committed their time by completing the Vital Signs® survey.

We are extremely grateful to all who participated. The result is a report that provides a portrait of our community at this moment in time.

We ask that you read the report and consider the issues raised and the feedback provided by the participants... and then step forward and help make Penticton a better place to live.



Paul McCann, President



Kim Lyster, Vital Signs® Committee Chair

# 2011 Report Highlights

## People

### Learning

Equality of access to educational opportunities throughout life is vital for the future.

### Health & Wellness

Many people in Penticton enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle; however health issues still need our attention.

### Arts & Culture

Penticton’s arts, culture & heritage scene is active with the need to focus on affordability and variety.

### Belonging & Leadership

We are an energetic, engaged community with active participation and committed leadership.

## Place

### Safety

There is still work to be done to reduce crime, but we do feel safe in our community.

### Getting Around

We are starting to embrace alternatives to cars for getting around Penticton.

### Environment

We must work together to reduce our environmental impact on this diverse and fragile region.

## Economy

### Getting Started

Beginning a new life in Penticton is challenging, particularly regarding housing and employment.

### Housing

The affordability and availability of housing options in Penticton puts a strain on many people.

### Gap Between Rich & Poor

Our community is not immune to the economic challenges facing all of BC.

### Work

Employment challenges closely mirror the rest of BC.

## Our Process

Vital Signs® is a long term initiative. Future reports will add context to these findings and help the community gauge its progress. Combining statistical analysis with community consultation provides a more complete picture of how we are doing.

### Goals

- Highlight areas of need
- Encourage collaborative solutions
- Build capacity by sharing information

### Community Leadership Team

15 representatives from key organizations serving Penticton contributed to the development of this report by offering their expertise and advice throughout the process

### Citizen Graders

More than 650 individuals completed the survey.

- 66% are female
- 76% are between the ages of 31 and 65
- 74% live within Penticton city limits (vs. West Bench, Naramata, or Kaleden)
- 51% have a household income under \$75,000/yr

### Research

Research was conducted to find statistically significant, locally relevant, and timely data with the assistance of the following agencies:

- The Social Planning and Research Council of BC
- Community Foundations of Canada
- The Centre for the Study of Living Standards



# How to read this report

## Category

The 11 Issue Areas fall broadly within three categories of community:

### *People, Place, and Economy*

The report is organized with these groupings in mind.

## Survey Grade

Citizens were invited to complete a survey on the health of Penticton, measuring 11 issue areas on the following 5 point scale:

- A** Awesome! Our community's the tops;
- B** We're doing well and headed in the right direction;
- C** Progress is being made;
- D** Of concern, needs attention;
- F** In dire need of corrective action.

### Learning

Equality of access to educational opportunities throughout life is vital for the future

Opportunities for life-long learning are important ingredients for a healthy community. The learning process is best supported by a solid foundation of skills established early in life. A strong education system enables our residents to fulfill their potential.

Survey Grade  
**B**

#### research findings

**23.7%**

of people 15 years and older have not completed high school (2006), a 36% improvement from 2001

**46.9%**

of people 15 years and older have post secondary education (2006), up by 12% from 2001

**72%**

of Aboriginal students completed high school (2006) compared to 69% for all of BC

**30%**

of School District #67 children may be vulnerable (measuring health, social, emotional, cognitive, communication)



People

## Research Findings

The statistics were collected with the assistance of SPARC BC and the Centre for the Study of Living Standards. Reliable sources such as Statistics Canada were used with an emphasis on the most current and geographically specific data possible.

## Public Opinion

Hundreds of comments were received from citizens through the online and offline survey process.

This section provides a sample of those comments.

#### How the Foundation is helping

In 2011, the Community Foundation contributed \$2,000 to the new Outma Sqliw School. The grant was specifically for purchasing library books to support reading programs between elders and students.

#### Citizen Feedback

Graduation rates are increasing in Penticton especially with our Aboriginal students. This is cause for celebration.

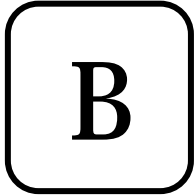
Continue to develop college and local arts facilities for lifelong learning. Convince the School District to embrace smaller school models rather than closing neighbourhood schools.

# Learning

Equality of access to educational opportunities throughout life is vital for the future

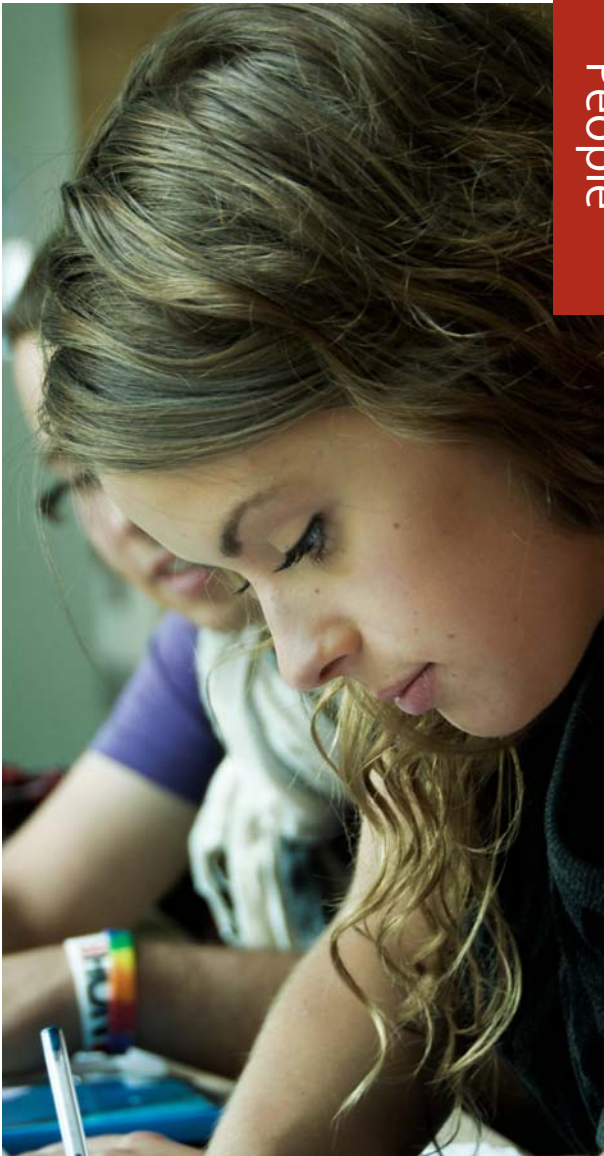
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Survey Grade



research findings

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**How the Foundation is helping**

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**Citizen Feedback**

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*Continue to develop college and local arts facilities for lifelong learning. Convince the School District to embrace smaller school models rather than closing neighbourhood schools.*



# Health & Wellness

Many people in Penticton enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle; however health issues still need our attention

How we live our lives, including our ability to make healthy choices and access needed services and supports, is necessary for our well-being. Health & wellness is a multi-dimensional issue, requiring balance in all aspects of life.

Survey Grade

**B-**

## research findings

<p><b>32.8%</b></p> <p>of residents report suffering from depression or anxiety on a chronic basis (2009) vs. 22.6% for all of BC</p>	<p><b>86%</b></p> <p>of Penticton youth reported good or excellent health in 2008 which is better than the BC average of 84%</p>	<p><b>1.59</b></p> <p>general practitioners per thousand residents in Penticton (2009) vs. 1.14 physicians per thousand for all of BC</p>	<p><b>28th</b></p> <p>Penticton's rank (out of 78 cities in BC) on the Composite Health Index vs. Vernon at 46<sup>th</sup> and the Central Okanagan at 55<sup>th</sup></p>
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## How the Foundation is helping

CFSO granted \$13,170 in 2011 to the Canadian Mental Health Association, which serves over 9000 healthy meals to individuals living with mental illness in addition to teaching healthy eating and cooking.

## Citizen Feedback

*Regarding access to and availability of physical activity opportunities ... we get an A in this department as we have so many beautiful areas that are easy to access and free.*

*There are considerable challenges in accessing doctors. Poverty and underemployment also impacts on health and the ability to manage obesity, chronic disease, and so on.*

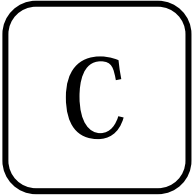


# Arts & Culture

Penticton’s arts, culture & heritage scene is active with the need to focus on affordability and variety

Our calendar of festivals and events enhances the experience of living in Penticton. Sustaining our arts, cultural and heritage resources – and development of new opportunities – will enrich our quality of life and provide legacies for the future.

Survey Grade



research findings

20%	\$8.06	17	\$36,369
of all cultural activities in Penticton are free to attend	BC Gaming grants per capita to Arts organizations, \$5.10 per capita for Vernon (2010)	designated heritage sites in Penticton (1.6 per decade of existence) vs. 20.1 per decade of existence in Kelowna	median earnings of arts & culture professionals in 2005; 6.8% below all of BC and a 2.8% decline from 2000



People

**How the Foundation is helping**

In 2011, the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan provided \$13,000 in grants to support the Shatford Centre, the Penticton Art Gallery, and the Okanagan Symphony Society.

**Citizen Feedback**

*There are lots of opportunities to see art exhibits, live theater, and music performances. The Events Centre was a nice addition, since we no longer have to commute to Kelowna to see concerts.*

*Many talented artists from a variety of genres live in the area and struggle to find venues and audiences for their work. Encouraging a more vibrant arts and cultural environment would attract tourists.*



# Belonging & Leadership

We are an energetic, engaged community with active participation and committed leadership

Being part of a community means feeling welcome and that your contributions are valued. Having a strong sense of belonging for citizens of all ages is vital to the health and wellbeing of our community.

Survey Grade

**B**

## research findings

**62.7%**

voter turnout in 2011 (Okanagan-Coquihalla) compared to 60.3% for Kelowna

**73%**

of Okanagan residents report a strong sense of community belonging

**93%**

of Okanagan residents report being satisfied with life

**7%**

of students in School District #67 feel bullied regularly; this is the same as the rest of BC

## How the Foundation is helping

The Foundation has twice granted funds to support Go Girls! – a group mentoring program designed to increase self-esteem for girls aged 10-12. It now runs at Skaha and KVR Middle Schools, and at Queens Park.

## Citizen Feedback

*...Penticton is a community of volunteers and we should identify, brand and celebrate that legacy. ... we should encourage more people to participate by reducing barriers to involvement.*

*...Communication about participation opportunities seems to be lacking. Aside from the library and stores on Main Street, there seems to be a lack of visible posters about events.*



# Safety

There is still work to be done to reduce crime, but we do feel safe in our community

Feeling safe is a fundamental human need. Community safety is improved when we provide activities for youth, opportunities for employment, help reduce poverty, and provide services for those struggling with addiction and mental health issues.

Survey Grade

B

research findings

26	47.8	739	136
Violent Crimes per 1000 people vs. 12/1000 in Vernon and 21/1000 in Kelowna (all 2009)	Property Crimes per 1000 people vs. 39.8/1000 in Vernon and 74.1/1000 in Kelowna (all 2009)	Penticton citizens per officer in 2009 compared to 600 citizens per officer in Vernon and 784 in Kelowna	overall crime rate per 1000 people compared to 125 / 1000 for Vernon 123 / 1000 for Kelowna



**How the Foundation is helping**

In 2006, the Community Foundation provided almost \$10,000 to Penticton Fire & Rescue and Community Policing. Both projects had long term goals of raising awareness and educating the public about safety.

**Citizen Feedback**

... Penticton is a fairly safe community that provides a sense of security for most of its residents. The presence of authority in Penticton is appropriate.

... the high levels of substance abuse probably contribute to various types of crime and violence.



## Getting Around

We are starting to embrace alternatives to cars for getting around Penticton

A comprehensive transportation system is important for accessing employment and community resources as well as reducing social isolation. Public and alternative transportation options reduce our reliance on cars and positively impact the environment.

Survey Grade

**B-**

### research findings

**1.1%**

of workers used public transit in 2006 vs. 2.7% in Kelowna and 0.8% in Vernon

**17%**

of Penticton citizens walked or biked to work in 2006, up 3% from 2001

**9.1 km**

of dedicated bike lanes have been created in Penticton since 2005

**413K**

rides were taken on the local buses (conventional) in 2010-2011 vs. 367,000 rides in 2007-2008

### How the Foundation is helping

The Community Foundation has provided funding for many years to assist with the enhancement and upgrade of many parts of the KVR / Trans Canada Trail in Penticton and the surrounding area.

### Citizen Feedback

*I think we have some great bike paths (could be more) and a good bus system – including the Handy Dart bus - that accommodates people with disabilities.*

*... would like to see more buses (smaller sized) running more often. The large buses are mainly empty... we also need regular bus service to Summerland.*

# Environment

We must work together to reduce our environmental impact on this diverse and fragile region

Enjoying the richness of our local environment is integral to a healthy lifestyle. Protecting this unique environment for future generations will not only ensure our personal well-being, but the health and vitality of our children.

Survey Grade

C+

research findings

522	2.4	197.5	1.9%
average litres per capita of daily water usage in 2010 vs. 589 average litres per capita in 2009	million gigajoules (GJ) of electricity consumed by buildings in 2007 vs. 2.95 million GJ for Vernon	kilograms per home of waste was recycled in 2010 vs. 183.3 kilograms per home in 2009	of our land area consists of parks and green space compared to 2.9% for Kelowna and 0.5% for Vernon



**How the Foundation is helping**

In 2011, the Community Foundation provided \$3,700 to the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance to start an education and training program that teaches citizens to monitor local water quality.

**Citizen Feedback**

*... Penticton is outstanding in this area, both as a community and as individuals. There is a high level of awareness and a common-sense approach to dealing with the issues.*

*We seem unaware of the fragile nature of our environment and things like invasive plant species, the disappearance of lands left in their natural state and the long-term issues surrounding water usage.*



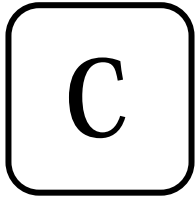


# Getting Started

Beginning a new life in Penticton is challenging, particularly regarding housing and employment

A welcoming and inclusive community provides equal opportunities for current residents, newcomers and young people just beginning independent life. The more successful we are in this effort, the more vibrant our community will be.

Survey Grade



research findings

<b>1.3%</b> of employable youth (15-24 yrs) received income assistance in Sept 2010 vs. 0.9% for all of BC	<b>2%</b> of 2006 residents lived outside BC in the previous year compared to 2.9% for all of BC	<b>72.6%</b> of new immigrants from 2007-09 have post-secondary education vs. 72.1% for all of BC	<b>7.5%</b> unemployment rate of immigrants (2006); 15.7% down from 2001 & 19% higher than non-immigrants
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## How the Foundation is helping

In 2011, the Community Foundation granted \$5,000 to the Salvation Army’s Community Kitchen. This new kitchen teaches families to cook healthy, tasty meals on a budget.

## Citizen Feedback

*Penticton is fortunate to be a multicultural gathering of people. It needs to foster that and build on it because there are still misconceptions between cultures.*

*Very hard to find child care; 2-3 year wait lists for day care was almost a deal-breaker for our young family and led to my husband and I each only working part-time and both being home part-time.*

# Housing

The affordability and availability of housing options in Penticton puts a strain on many people

Safe, affordable housing is critical to our quality of life. Where we live - and the conditions we live under - have a great deal to do with our capacity to make meaningful contributions to society. When we spend too much of our income on housing we are severely restricted in all other areas of life.

Survey Grade

D-

research findings

<p><b>50%</b></p> <p>of renters spend more than 30% of their gross income on rent payments compared to 43% for all of BC</p>	<p><b>19%</b></p> <p>of home owners spend 30% or more of their gross income on major payments vs. 22% for Kelowna and 20% for Vernon</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>beds are available in emergency shelters in Penticton compared to Vernon's 25 beds in 2010 and 17 beds in 2009</p>	<p><b>4.4%</b></p> <p>apartment vacancy rate in 2010 compared to 1% vacancy in 2005 (15 fewer apartments in the rental inventory)</p>
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**How the Foundation is helping**

In 2011, the Community Foundation provided a grant of \$8,000 to enhance accessibility in housing serving seniors operated by the Penticton & District Community Resources Society.

**Citizen Feedback**

*Rental housing is adequate right now... competition brings the rent down to where it should be affordable to most people.*

*We need the development of true 'communities' within the city where people can live, work, and shop within walking distance.*

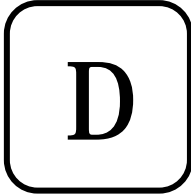


# Gap Between Rich & Poor

Our community is not immune to the economic challenges facing all of BC

A caring community supports those individuals in the greatest need. Poverty is a very challenging issue in Penticton and across Canada. If we effectively address this issue we will see improvements in the quality of life for those living in poverty as well as for the community as a whole.

Survey Grade



research findings

<b>14.4%</b> of children under 18 were living in poverty in 2005 (based on LICO); down 17% from 2000	<b>\$14.44</b> per hour is the estimated Living Wage for a family of four in 2011; 1/3 of families earn less	<b>21.9%</b> of the total income earned by all workers in Penticton is shared by the lowest 50% of income earners	<b>12%</b> of Penticton's elderly lived in poverty in 2005 vs. 13.8% in Vernon and 14.7% in BC
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**How the Foundation is helping**

The Community Foundation granted \$3,000 to the Penticton & Area Women’s Centre in 2011 to enhance their response to citizens experiencing crisis due to poverty, domestic violence and other social issues.

**Citizen Feedback**

*... we’re doing okay...slowly overcoming the ‘sunshine tax’ stigma. Could always be better...the programs that exist are trying their hardest.*

*Penticton needs to support youth much better. New parents who work struggle as the wage a new worker can earn is not enough to live and provide opportunities for their children.*



# Work

## Employment challenges closely mirror the rest of BC

Having meaningful, satisfying employment contributes to well-being and self confidence. Building a strong, diverse economy that supports competitive wages is necessary to the long term health of our community.

Survey Grade

D+

research findings

8.6%	\$36,283	59.3%	14,425
unemployment rate in the Thompson Okanagan in 2010; 1% higher than all of BC	Average personal income in 2008 compared to \$40,736 for BC as a whole; a 0.8% increase from 2007	of the population in the Thompson Okanagan was employed in 2010 (down 1% from 2005)	# of citizens who worked in 2006 (57% of the population) vs. 58.8% for Vernon



### How the Foundation is helping

In 2010, the Community Foundation provided funding to help expand child care spaces at the After School Program. Parents rely on quality child care to be able to go to work.

### Citizen Feedback

*It is hard for a small city to provide the variety of employment that is available in larger cities. More employment opportunities need to be created. That means people have to take risks.*

*Too many people are working multiple jobs at wages insufficient to maintain themselves. We could be competitive to attract new jobs but we don't want change.*

Vital Signs® is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities, identifies significant trends, and shares opportunities for action in areas critical to quality of life.

Vital Signs® is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

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## Acknowledgements

### Vital Signs® Project Team

Paul McCann – President, CFSO  
Kim Lyster – Committee Chair, Board Member, CFSO  
Patrick Bell – Board Member, CFSO  
Aaron McRann – Executive Director, CFSO

### Research Network

Andrew Sharpe – Centre for the Study of Living Standards  
Lorraine Copas – Social Planning & Research Council of BC  
Sara Lyons – CFC Program Director

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Penticton & District Community Resources Society  
Vancouver Foundation & the Government of Canada through Canada's Rural Partnership

### Community Leadership Team

Barb Haynes – *Downtown Penticton*  
Brad Haugli – *RCMP*  
Bryn White – *South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program*  
David Arsenaault – *Economic Development Officer*  
Donna Lomas – *Okanagan College*

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