

Poverty report shows both progress and worsening in Hamilton Senior poverty rate is down. while child poverty rate is increasing

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Signs of Hope

- General poverty rate decreased in the City of Hamilton from 19.8% in 2000 to 18.1% in 2005
 - » In large part due to large decrease in senior poverty rate (24.4% to 16.6%)
 - Similar decrease across Canada, one major reason has been increasing applications for the Guaranteed Income Supplement program. Local groups have worked with seniors to make sure they are accessing all their entitlements.
 - Also more female seniors have worked in the paid labour force for at least part of their lives, giving them greater access to Canada Pension Plan benefits
- Since 2006, there has been a slow increase in social assistance incomes
 - » Successful advocacy by local groups led the City of Hamilton in 2006 to begin phasing out the municipal portion of the National Child Benefit clawback for families on social assistance.
 - » Beginning in 2007, the Ontario government established an annual 2% cost of living increase for all social assistance recipients, and in 2008 introduced of the Ontario Child Benefit program for families on social assistance which will be fully implemented by July 2009.
- First Incomes and Poverty report in 2004 has significant impacts
 - » 2004 Incomes and Poverty report was used by community groups for advocacy and to engage Hamilton community to fight poverty, not to treat poverty as just one sector's responsibility.
 - » The report was one of the catalysts for the creation of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
 - » In 2006, the United Way established poverty reduction as one of its three priority areas

Signs of Concern

- Child poverty rates have increased in Hamilton (rate for children under 6 was 25.2% in 2000 and 26.4% in 2005)
 - » Partially due to more children living in female lone parent-led families; shows need for additional support for these families
- Poverty rates and number of people in poverty in some suburban areas increasing
 - » Almost double number of persons in poverty in Ancaster from 1995-2005
 - » 30% increase in number of persons living in poverty in Flamborough between 2000 and 2005
 - » No change in Dundas, but decreases in old Hamilton and Stoney Creek
- Current economic situation is having negative impacts in Hamilton
 - » Poverty rate is increasing daily
 - EI recipients are up more than 36% since last year
 - Ontario Works caseload is the highest since 2001, with more than 1,600 additional recipients since November 2008.
 - » Manufacturing hit especially hard, which disproportionately affects men, although women continue to have higher poverty rate

Full report available at: www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/Poverty/Poverty.php

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