



LONDON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

LONDON'S

**VitalSigns**

[www.londonvitalsigns.ca](http://www.londonvitalsigns.ca)

# Life is good... until it isn't

Understanding the issues  
affecting our community



<http://londonvitalsigns.ca/about>



Bigger, more diverse, and more exciting than ever before. I am talking about London and Middlesex County of course.

In the heart of southwestern Ontario, London is a special place to live and work. We're approaching half a million in population and yet still appreciate the relative affordability and security that a mid-size community has combined with the business and career opportunities of a big city.

Thoughtful generations before us carefully planned the tree-lined streets, numerous parks, extensive walking and biking trails and an abundance of recreation facilities that we enjoy today.

Today I see citizens of all ages involved with community groups in every neighbourhood. More and more new Canadians are choosing London as their home. New apartment towers are going up in the core, City officials released an ambitious plan to overhaul downtown that includes creating more residential space and reconnecting with the

Thames River. We're attracting some of the best sports and entertainment events. Yes, the London as you know today is different from the London of 10 years ago. In fact, at no other point in history have we had as many tools at our disposal to develop this City to its fullest potential.

**Yes, life is good – until it isn't.**

Our third Vital Signs® report compiles research conducted by individual organizations and identifies trends – both good and bad - across the City. Perhaps not surprisingly to many of you, even though we want our community to be smart, caring, inclusive, productive, forward-looking, and healthy – the reality is we are falling short.

Since we released Vital Signs® 2010, it's only gotten worse for those most vulnerable in our community. The

need for subsidized housing is increasing, more children are living in poverty and our smoking rate is above both the Ontario and Canadian average.

This report is a call to become more informed about the health and well being of our vibrant community. As you read this report, I encourage you to reflect on how you – as a member of this community – feel we are doing in each area. Visit [www.londonvitalsigns.ca](http://www.londonvitalsigns.ca) and let us know your thoughts.

*Martha Powell*

Sincerely  
Martha Powell, President and CEO

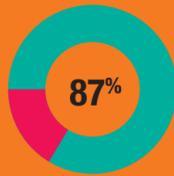
# Housing



Abe Oudshoorn believes that once you solve housing, you can start on the other problems. "We can only go so far with addiction, mental health and unemployment until we need to get people housed," says Oudshoorn, Housing First advocate and Assistant Professor, Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, Western University. "There's only one cure for homelessness and that's housing." London Community Foundation's new social loan program is working to meet the need with loans of up to \$500,000 for affordable housing builds.

**Over the years, London has enjoyed a steady trend in housing starts and our real estate market continues to grow but affordable housing remains an issue for many of us. The average wait time for social/affordable housing for a family, is 8.2 years**

## Emergency Shelter Beds



London's 360 emergency shelter beds operated at 87% capacity in 2011

(Source: City of London)

## Gross Shelter Income Ratio

In 2006, in the London CMA, the average household spent 22.6% of their income on housing compared to 23.0% in Ontario and 21.8% in Canada. (Source: Statistics Canada)

## Average Affordable Housing

There are 8,085 units of social housing within the City, 5,939 offer rent-geared-to-income. The affordable housing units are at or below average market rent, but may not be rent geared to income. (Source: London Community Housing Strategy, 2011 Report)

## Wait Times for Housing

It has been calculated that the social/affordable housing wait time for a family is 8.2 years, 3 years if fast tracked. (Source: Abe Oudshoorn, London Homeless Outreach Network)

## Long-term Care beds:

# of long-term care beds in London – 2,287  
# of long-term care beds in Middlesex – 745  
(Source: Southwest Community Care Access Centre)

## London Housing Prices 2012:

Detached bungalow – \$240,000  
Exec. Detached two-storey – \$316,500  
Luxury Condo Apt. – \$251,000  
Standard two-storey – \$251,300  
Standard townhouse – \$181,000

## Average Rental Prices (2011 CMHC)

Bachelor apt. – \$533  
1 Bdrm apt. – \$710  
2 Bdrm apt. – \$881  
3+ Bdrm apt. – \$1,053

## Rental Vacancy Rates:

Bachelor apt. – 3.6%  
1 Bdrm apt. – 3.2%  
2 Bdrm apt. – 4.2%  
3+ Bdrm apt. – 5.1%

(Source: London Economic Development Corporation)

## 2011 Building Permits

3,935 Building permits issued (residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, other).  
A decrease of 13.1% over 2010.  
(Source: London Economic Development Corporation)



<http://londonvitalsigns.ca/housing>

# Health & wellness



Secure housing, affordable food, meaningful work and good relationships are key to our health and wellbeing. From Tuesday to Thursday every week, women in the micro-enterprise program turn to each other for support as they build their own businesses and rebuild their lives. "We really wanted to create something that was a hand up," says Susan McPhail, Director of My Sister's Place. "Micro-enterprise empowers women to discover talents, and strengths and abilities they never thought they had and to become productive citizens again."

**Overall health is affected by many socioeconomic factors. Access to a medical doctor, income, education, housing, and occupation in particular has shown strong correlations to mental health, nutrition and healthy birth weights of infants. As the rate of poverty increases in London, so too, does the level of concern for our health and wellness.**

## Low Birth Weight Babies

In the Southwestern Ontario Health Region in 2010-11, 6.1% of newborn babies were of low birth weight compared to 6.7% in the province and 6.2% in Canada. (Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI))

## Children and Mental Health

Among children receiving mental health services, 6 out of 10 have an attention problem, just over half have problems managing anger and just under half suffer from anxiety or depression.

(Source: Report prepared for the Child and Youth Network)

## Obesity Rates

In 2012, in the Middlesex London Health Unit region the obesity rate for people 18 years and over was 20.1% compared to 18.0% in both Ontario and Canada. (Statistics Canada)

## Smoking Rates

In 2011, 20.7% of the population aged 12 and over in the Middlesex-London Health Unit region, identified themselves as current smokers, higher than the provincial rate (19.4%) and the national rate (19.9%). (Statistics Canada)

## London Police Calls Related to Mental Illness

- The volume of mental health calls/investigations that London Police respond to increased by 12% from 1,411 calls in 2005 to 1,574 in 2009.
- The average time spent on those calls increased by 32% from 254 minutes in 2005 to 335 in 2009.
- Up to \$7.3 million of the 2012 Police budget will be spent on events involving individuals identified as having "definite or probable serious mental illness". (London Police Service)

## General Mental Health Info

40% of homeless shelter users in London present with mental health and addiction issues. (Source: United Way of London & Middlesex)

## Perceived Life Stress

In 2011, 22.3% of the population aged 15 and over in the Middlesex-London Health Unit region reported experiencing quite a lot of stress on most days compared to 23.3% in Ontario and 23.6% in Canada. (Statistics Canada)



<http://londonvitalsigns.ca/health-and-wellness>

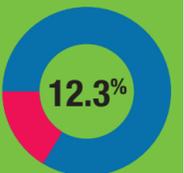
# Gap between rich & poor



It's taken just six years for the community around Dundas and Ontario St. to transform a vacant lot into a garden oasis. Peek into the arched doorway and you'll see food grown by neighbourhood kids, walking paths for seniors, and a comfy patio area. "We didn't just fly in with great lumps of funding and make it happen overnight," says Jacqueline Thompson, Director of LifeSpin. "The community around us, and the low-income people that we serve, their hands are in this garden. They created this space."

**Like elsewhere in Ontario, London continues to experience increasing income inequality. London has a higher proportion of residents below the low-income cut-off (LICO) and one of the highest overall poverty rates and incidence of child poverty rates in the province and across Canada. Interestingly, London fares quite well in the poverty rate for the elderly.**

## Overall Poverty Rate



In 2010, the overall poverty rate in the London CMA was 12.3% compared to 8.8% in Ontario and 9.0% in Canada (based on the after-tax Low Income Cut-off (LICO)).

(Statistics Canada)

## Elderly Poverty Rate

In 2010, 0.6% of the people 65+ in the London CMA had incomes below the Low Income Cut-off (LICO) compared to 4.3% in Ontario and 5.3% in Canada. (Statistics Canada)

## Incidence of Child Poverty

In 2010, the incidence of child poverty in the London CMA was 12.1% compared to 8.0% in Ontario and 8.2% in Canada. (Statistics Canada)

## Use of Food Banks

An average of 3,000 people visited the London Food Bank every month in 2011. (Source: London Food Bank)

## Children's Aid Society

CAS provided 865 children with in-care resources and provided prevention services to an additional 2,042 families in the community representing service to more than 4,000 children and youth. (Source: 2010-2011 Annual Report, Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex)

## Ontario Works Caseloads

Almost 11,000 households totalling an average of about 24,000 people including all adults and children received Ontario Works income each month in the first half of 2011. This represents approximately 6.6% of London's household and total population.

Of all the people who received benefits in July 2011, 64% were adults and 36% were children under the age of 18. (Source: City of London)

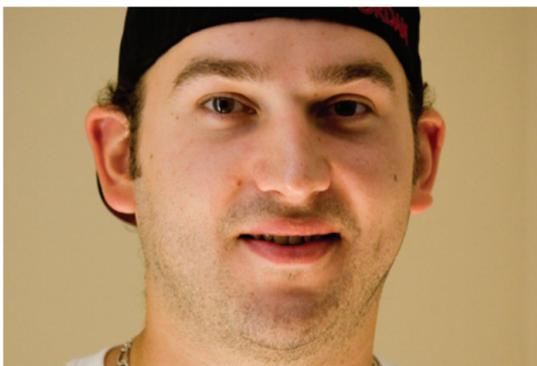
## Immigrants and Poverty

- 17% of families in London live below the Low Income Cut-off.
- 46% of single parents and one in five children in London lives in poverty
- 51% of immigrants live below the Low Income Cut-off
- One in five Londoners is an immigrant
- London has the highest per capita population of refugees in Canada (Source: United Way of London & Middlesex)



<http://londonvitalsigns.ca/gap-between-rich-poor>

# Getting started



It's pretty rare that a potential employer doesn't want job experience. So when Nick Mocilli finished school, he was surprised to see a job ad requesting just that. Pathways Skill Development offered training and skills enhancement to new and chronically unemployed workers – and an opportunity to restore the Red Antiquities Building, a London landmark. Nick is especially proud of the many hours he spent stripping, sanding and painting the 139 year-old windows. "The biggest thing I learned is to have the dedication to come every day and give 100%."

**London is home to a relatively large multicultural population (1 in 5 Londoners is an immigrant) however getting started in a community whether one is Canadian born or not has its challenges. Youth unemployment is over 4% higher in London than the Ontario average.**

## Unemployment Rate of Immigrants and Non-Immigrants

In 2006, the unemployment rate for immigrants who entered Canada between 2001-2006 was 12.4%, while the unemployment rate for non-immigrants was 6.0%. In 2011, in Ontario, the unemployment rate for immigrants who entered Canada within the last 5 years was 14.8% compared to 5.4% for the Canadian-born population. (Source: Statistics Canada)

## Unemployment Rate for Youth (15-24)

In the first half of 2012, 18.7% of youth (15-24) were unemployed in London CMA compared to 17% in Ontario and 14.8% in Canada.

(Source: Statistics Canada)

## Average Total Income for Economic Families by Immigrant Status

The average income (2005) for London CMA families:

**Non-immigrants – \$88,669**

**Immigrants – \$75,204**

**Recent immigrants (2001-2004) – \$50,107**

**Recent immigrant's income as a share of non-immigrant income – 56.5%** (Source: Statistics Canada)

## Women Immigrants of London (WIL)

In WIL's 2011-2012 Annual Report, 18% of their clientele was from Colombia and 27% of their clientele spoke Spanish as their first language.

## Immigrants and Education

According to the London Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council (LMIEC) over 50% of recent immigrants have a university degree – twice the proportion of the Canadian born population at 22%.



The Red Antiquities Building, a London landmark.



<http://londonvitalsigns.ca/getting-started-our-community>

# Environment



Planting trees may be more exciting, but aftercare is critical to making sure your saplings grow into a forest. "There are so many trees coming down now it's really concerning," says Nancy Southern as she lugs a bucket of mulch at a company-sponsored volunteer day. "I think that it's really important that we keep planting as many as we can." ReForest London's Million Tree Challenge is almost 10,000 trees into its 10-year mandate. "People are really proud of being the Forest City," says Julie Ryan, Program Director. "We need to translate that pride into action."

**Due to urban and agricultural development over the past century, the majority of London's original wetlands and forests have been drained or cleared in the interest of development. The City of London has made considerable effort to protect what's left and deems natural attributes as an integral part of an overall healthy community.**

## Residential Waste Diversion Rate

42%

London has a 42% diversion rate compared to 54% in Woodstock, 35% in Sarnia and 32% in the more rural Chatham-Kent.

(Source: London Free Press 2012)

## Water Consumption

**In London, an average of 209 litres per capita was used for residential use in 2011. The toilet represents, on average, 40% of the daily/monthly water use in a home.**

(Source: City of London. This number represents the water use of residents living in detached, semi-detached, row housing, or townhouse style dwellings that have a water meter in their home and pay the residential water rate. It does not include stacked apartments, apartment buildings, row houses, or townhouses that share a water meter and domestic water as a common element paid through rent or condo fees.)

## Private Vehicle Gas Emissions

In the London CMA, private vehicle gas emissions totaled 943 tonnes of CO2 equivalent.

Canada's per capita GHG emissions from private vehicles reached 2,149 kg in 2007. This was 2% higher than 2006, but 14% higher than the 1990 level of 1,887 kg per capita.

(Source: Statistics Canada)



## Air Quality

In 2010, there were 21 days in London where the maximum 8 hour ozone was greater than 65ppb. (Source: Environment Canada. Substantial evidence exists to show links with a wide range of health effects (e.g., lung function decrements, pulmonary inflammation) and prolonged exposures (i.e., 6- to 8-hr) to ozone at levels measured in the ambient air)

## Water Conservation Practices

In the London CMA (2009):

- 68.5% of households used a low-flow showerhead
- 57.2% of households had a low-volume toilet

(Source: Statistics Canada)



<http://londonvitalsigns.ca/environment>

# Arts & culture



London Arts Council's Artists in Education program will put professional, working artists in the classroom starting January 2013. Kids will learn that a career in the arts is possible, and get inspired to pursue their own creative passions. Artists, from musicians and actors to writers, painters and playwrights, will share their craft with the next generation. "The thing that excites me most about the program is the ability of the arts to give voice, self-esteem and confidence to young children," says Catherine McInnis, Arts Education Coordinator.

**The City of London has long recognized the intrinsic value of a creative city. One ingredient of a creative city is a diverse arts, cultural, recreation and heritage sector. Research demonstrates that children exposed to an arts education throughout their academic years tend to thrive and have positive outcomes in their life beyond scholastic achievement.**

## Library Use as Measured by circulation per capita

- In 2010, 11.06 items per capita were circulated in the London Public Library.
- 2011 total items borrowed: 4,249,557 (this includes all LPL materials: books, e-materials, magazines, CDs, DVDs (increase of 5.23% from 2010) (Source: Canadian Public Library Statistics)

## Number of Libraries

18/20

The Middlesex County Library has 18 branches throughout the county. The London Public Library has 16 locations around the city.

(Source: London Public Library)

- 4,501,296 in-person visits to a library location
- 1,315,613 reference questions asked
- 518,318 uses of our public computers
- 170,871 wireless logins at a library location (increase of 44% from 2010)
- 192,195 participants in our programs (increase of 2.77% from 2010)
- 15,063 programs or series of programs offered (increase of 7.38% from 2010)
- 4,501,296 visits to our website, to look for information, use databases, renew material, place holds, etc.
- 19,227 new card registrations
- 96,770 e-resources borrowed in 2011 (includes e-books, e-audiobooks and e-videos)

## Municipal Spending on Recreation and Culture per Household (2008)

In 2008, \$444.00 was spent on recreation and culture per household in the London CMA. (Source: London Public Library)

## Arts & Culture Revenue

The Tourism and Hospitality sector in London generates in excess of \$450 million annually into the London economy and supports over 6,100 full year jobs.

London hosts 1.4 million overnight visitors and 1.5 day visitors annually, 87% from Canada, 11% from the U.S. and 2% international.

Over 34% of tourism spending is for food and beverage in restaurants and food stores, 24% in retail stores and 12% for accommodation and 7% for entertainment. (Tourism London (2012-2016 Business Plan)

## Budweiser Gardens

Venues Today magazine (Sept 2012) placed Budweiser Gardens (until recently known as The John Labett Centre) as the #3 "Top Stop" of the Decade based on gross sales. Bud Gardens ranked higher than any other Canadian facility in this category of 10,000 – 15,000 capacity.



<http://londonvitalsigns.ca/arts-and-culture>



## About London Community Foundation

In the simplest terms, community foundations are charitable organizations dedicated to improving communities in specific geographical areas. They do this by pooling the charitable gifts of donors to create endowment funds and using the investment income to make grants, and providing leadership on key community issues.

Since 1979 London Community Foundation has been working to ensure prosperity across generations who choose to make a life in London and Middlesex County by pooling the charitable gifts of many donors into a permanent, income-earning endowment.

Each year grants from the earnings of these funds are used to support a broad variety of charitable initiatives from health, education and social services to arts, culture and the environment.

London Community Foundation is a proud member of Community Foundations of Canada – the national membership organization for over 175 community foundations across Canada.

## Our Mission

Through the power of giving, we create a vibrant and caring community by investing strategically in innovative community-based solutions.

## Our Vision

A community working together so that each member has the opportunity for an enriched quality of life.

## London's Vital Signs®

What are the issues facing our communities? How are we responding? Is there a way you can make a difference? These are just some of the questions tackled by Vital Signs®, a national program of Canada's community foundations.

We research and report on London's quality of life in our biennial Vital Signs® Report. It is a consolidated snapshot of the trends in our city, highlighting progress we should be proud of and challenges that need to be addressed.

The Report is compiled from current statistics and special studies which look at six different, yet interconnected, issue areas that are critical to the well-being of our city and its residents.

The goals of the London's Vital Signs® Report include inspiring civic engagement, providing focus for public debate, and guiding donors and stakeholders who want to direct their resources to areas of greatest need.

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs® is co-ordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

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SMART & CARING  
COMMUNITIES



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# Ten Reasons People Choose Community Foundations

**1** We are a local organization with deep roots in the community, and part of a nationwide movement whose support we build and share.

**2** We bring donors to the table as community builders, working closely with them to align their philanthropic vision with the community's needs.

**3** We identify long-term needs and opportunities and invest in solutions that let our communities guide their own future.

**4** We take a broad and inclusive view of what a community is, and provide grants to the widest possible range of organizations and initiatives.

**5** We provide highly personal and flexible service, accepting a wide variety of assets and offering donors maximum tax advantage.

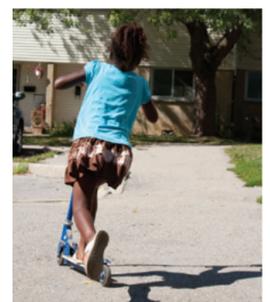
**6** We build permanent funds and those that can respond to immediate needs, helping our communities ensure vital futures.

**7** We multiply the impact of gift dollars by pooling them with other gifts.

**8** We believe that diversity is strength, so we bring the entire community together to stimulate new ideas, build participation and strengthen community philanthropy.

**9** We are transparent and reputable stewards of community resources, committed to being accountable accessible and responsive.

**10** We build community vitality – the unique and essential spirit that flourishes when people believe their community holds possibilities for everyone.



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