

WATERLOO REGION'S

Vital Signs[®]

Literacy, Learning & Education



Literacy, learning, education: three essential attributes that everyone needs in order to cope with the complex demands of every day life.

The inaugural *Waterloo Region's Vital Signs* report, a snapshot on the quality of life in our community, shone a light on the fact that less than half of the population in Waterloo Region holds some form of post-secondary education and that our residents barely surpassed the minimum English literacy standards for competence in a modern economy.

Abundant research tells us about the many consequences of low literacy rates; poverty, unemployment, poor health, higher crime rates, to name a few. In fact, a recent report by TD Bank predicts that without improved literacy rates, Canada itself will not be able to compete with the rest of the world.

So, for a community that values innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology, how is it possible that we scored so low in these important areas and what can we do to compel change?

For example, you can support local programs that are doing good work in raising literacy levels like Pathways to Education housed at the Catholic Family Counselling Centre www.cfchelps.ca and Project READ www.projectread.ca.

***Waterloo Region's Vital Signs* is an annual checkup through which The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation and the Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation measure the vitality of our Region, identify significant trends, and invite community supporters to assign grades in 11 key areas critical to Waterloo Region's quality of life.**

Community foundations provide a simple, powerful, and highly personal approach to giving and help others to make a lasting difference in their community.



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