

Forum on Housing Needs puts Vital Signs report into action



SDCF Board Member Barbara Knoll, standing, takes part in a discussion group at the Forum on Housing Needs held Dec. 5.

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When the Selkirk and District Community Foundation released its Vital Signs report in April 2018, the Board of Directors made a commitment to improving on areas the report identified as having weak pulses.

One area that was in need of attention was housing, and on Dec. 5, the Forum on Housing Needs brought together more than 50 people with deep connections to local

housing and together, they took the first steps in working towards results-based outcomes.

Executive Director Bev Clegg said Vital Signs was completed in 2018, but is in no way done. The document is a snapshot of the health of the community at that given time, and it serves as a starting point for betterment.

“Vital Signs was created by the people of Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements, so it is their vision and their assessment of their own community,” Clegg said.

“The SDCF is committed to moving the Vital Signs vision forward. Housing was then, and is now, an area identified as needing improvement, and that’s what the Forum on Housing Needs intends to accomplish.”

The Forum brought together representatives from non-profit groups, private business and local governments to discuss housing needs.

Facilitator Shirley Muir broke the large group into smaller ones for discussion purposes, allowing participants to converse with new acquaintances who all share the same goal.

After several sessions with different groups, participants were asked to identify their top concerns for improving housing – the top four were: municipal development agreements that address affordable housing, aging in place housing, mixed and integrated housing and more long-term and transitional housing.

A second housing forum is being planned.

St. Clements Mayor Debbie Fiebelkorn took part in the Forum and said it was impressive to see those who can affect change in local housing show up and take part in what is a crucial area of concern, not just in the Tri-S area, but globally.

"Vital Signs identified housing as an area that needs improving and I think we can all agree with that," Fiebelkorn said.

"The Forum on Housing Needs provided an excellent opportunity for important conversation that will move all three municipalities forward and take us from talking about what needs to be done to implementing actions."

Selkirk & District Community Foundation is one of 50+ Community Foundations from across the province. SDCF *creates* different ways for people to give back to their community, *connects* donors with community wishes and dreams and *provides grants* that touch a lot of people. This means the Foundation works with thoughtful community minded donors, who believe in the power of endowment, that provides financial support to other charitable and non-profit community organizations. In its 24th year the Foundation has given in excess of \$2.4 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations. This volunteer board and staff along with donors from all walks of life - work together so the community is "Here for Good". For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.785.0547.