

**MEDIA ADVISORY – MAY 4, 2011**

### ***New group of community champions joins Poverty Roundtable***

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction will re-convene on Thursday to move forward with its ambitious Action Plan to reduce and eliminate poverty. The Roundtable announced a restructuring in January and nearly 30 new community champions will join other long-time members of the initiative.

In January, the Roundtable put out an open call for applications to join the collaborative group; the community response was nothing short of astounding. More than one hundred dedicated Hamiltonians – from all walks of life- applied for fifteen volunteer positions. “We were overwhelmed with the passion and dedication of so many people in this community” said Roundtable chair Howard Elliott, noting that it “speaks volumes to the commitment of Hamiltonians to come together to tackle poverty”.

In addition to the fifteen community members, new Roundtable members will also include representatives from community partner organizations – such as the school boards, McMaster University and Mohawk College, the Jobs Prosperity Collaborative, the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and the Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Committee. Returning Roundtable members will also continue to participate at the table to share their knowledge and advise on the Roundtable’s direction.

Included amongst the Roundtable’s new members are small business owners, directors of agencies, community volunteers, members of faith organizations and a wide selection of individuals with the lived experience of poverty who have been so instrumental to the Roundtable’s approach and success.

New member, Laura Cattari is excited to be joining the table. “By engaging with the Roundtable not only do I have an opportunity to affect change, but to empower myself and others” said Cattari.

Ashley Greenwood, director of a Dundas youth centre, another new member of the Roundtable said “I wanted to join the Roundtable to be part of the process to change poverty in the Hamilton area.”

The Roundtable’s Action Plan, released to City Council late last fall includes shifting attitudes about poverty, working to make Hamilton a Living Wage Community, reforming social assistance and developing a universal school nutrition program for all children in the City. Recently the City of Hamilton dedicated \$8 million towards social services initiatives and social housing priorities at the recommendation of the Roundtable and other community groups.

The Roundtable convened by the Hamilton Community Foundation and the City of Hamilton has been in existence since 2005 and has influenced poverty reduction policies locally and provincially; it was awarded the Canadian Urban Institute ‘David Crombie Award’ in 2009 for its innovative approaches to tackling poverty.

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