



Introduction

Multi-sectoral collaboration between government, the private sector, non-profit organizations, and people with grounded expertise has been recognized as a core principle of effective poverty reduction work by Vibrant Communities (Tamarack Institute). The [Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force](#) works in partnership with 52 community-based social agencies, planning tables, community groups; universities, institutes and policy-makers.

We have created a platform that allows for meaningful dialogue, education and purposeful partnerships that address the root causes of poverty in our community. The work of our [Poverty Task Force](#) is delivered through 6 Action Groups and our Community Voices. In 2019, we continue to work on [4 key strategic directions](#) :

- **From Band-Aids to Bridges:** moving forward with Community Food Centres
- **Enough to Thrive On:** seeking income security solutions for strong communities
- **From Housing to Homes:** prioritizing safe and affordable homes to create safe and healthy neighbourhoods.
- **We All Live Here:** ensuring diversity, inclusion and engagement in Municipal decision-making.

We work across many planning tables within our Action Groups - most notably at the [Moving Forward on Health Equity Action Group](#) which brings together 5 planning tables to take joint action; and our Food Security Action Group partnership with the Grey Bruce Sustainability Network.

We have continued our formal partnership with the [Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment](#) and [Centre for Environmental Health Equity, Queen's University](#) on the [RentSafe](#) project; and as Vibrant Communities member of [Tamarack Institute](#) we have deepened our work with other mid-Ontario Rural Communities and this year saw the Poverty Task providing more mentorship through web-conferences, consults and speaking engagements in the region.

We are also engaged as advisory members of the [Vital Signs Advisory Committee](#), [Bruce Grey Data Information Sharing Collaborative \(BGDISC\)](#), Grey Bruce Index of Well-Being Advisory Committee and the Community Safety & Well-Being Planning Committee.

PTF Budget Reporting

Our budget revenue in 2019 was \$50,000. This went towards the full-time Planning Network Coordinator's wages, benefits and travel; admin/printing/meeting experiences, Community Voices admin/meeting expenditures, support to Grey Bruce Community Income Tax Clinic phone, Tamarack Membership and PTF Wordpress website domain maintenance.

Several PTF supported projects received funding from other sources:

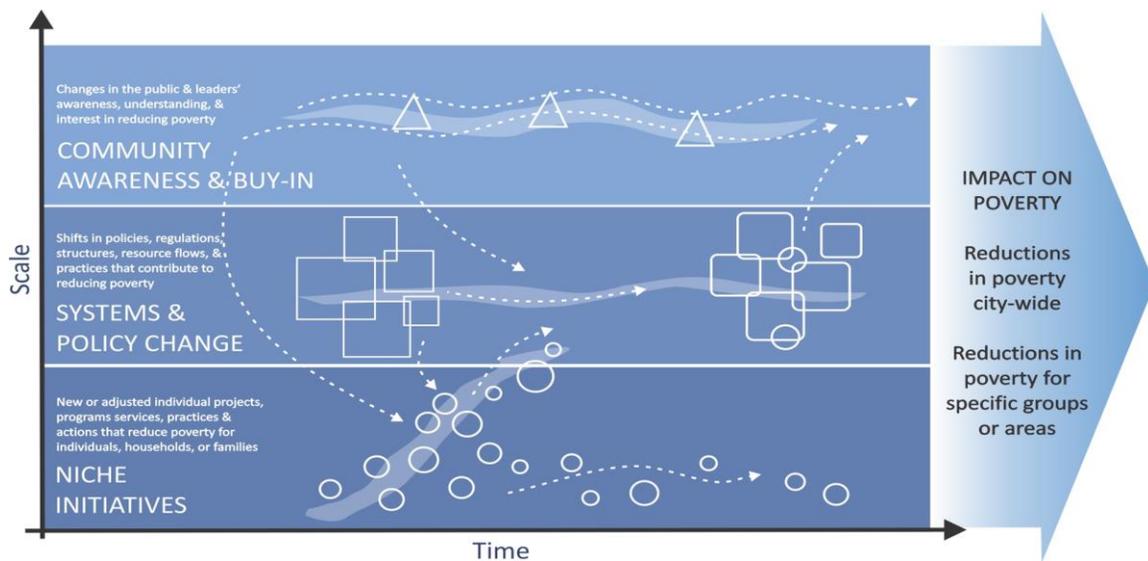
- Food Security Conversations + Fall Food Gathering 2019 – United Way Bruce Grey, Grey Bruce Sustainability Network
- Community Volunteer Income Tax Network – United Way Bruce Grey
- Getting to Impact Project – Tamarack Institute (in-kind)
- The Sharing Impact Project (Shared Measurement Training & Impact Report production) – Community Foundation GB
- Working with People with Living/Lived Experience training – CMHA funding

Poverty Reduction Strategies

While the Ontario government is currently developing a new Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2020 the Federal government released its [Dimensions of Poverty Hub](#) in July 2019—Canada’s official dashboard for monitoring poverty reduction. In addition to Canada’s [First Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), the Federal government also released its [“Everyone At the Table” Food Policy for Canada](#).

For the first time in history, Canada’s official poverty rate is below 10% (9.5%, StatsCan, 2017). This is attributed to the Canada Child Benefit having a positive impact on families’ incomes, playing a key role in reducing child poverty. Locally, at the county level 17.9% (Bruce County) and 20% (Grey County) of children/youth (aged 0-17) still live below the poverty line. At the municipality level, it can range from 29.3% (Huron-Kinloss) to 9.5% (Georgian Bluffs). (StatsCan 2017). And 20% of Grey Bruce households are food insecure according to our 2019 Nutritious Food Basket Survey. (GBHU, 2019)

Getting to Impact Project



As a member of Tamarack Institute, the Poverty Task Force joined the Getting To Impact pilot project in 2019 which seeks to measure the impact of poverty reduction tables across Canada. Three members of the Poverty Task Force participated in a 6-month training. Two members were able to participate in a Cities Reducing Poverty 3-day conference in Kitchener in Oct 2019 entitled [“End of Poverty”](#) and were presenters in a Getting to Impact workshop.

We have taken the year to evaluate our programming impact and are now at the stage of writing the first IMPACT Report. This will set a baseline for measurement. In 2019, we received funding from Community Foundation Grey Bruce to develop a Shared Measurement System to report against our baseline indicators under the leadership of Tamarack. We shall be using some tools such as Most Significant Change to collect stories and report on social change.

Food Security Action Group (FSAG)



This year, 5 Food Security Conversations were held across Grey Bruce facilitated by Kimberly Edwards with the Grey Bruce Sustainability Network. This was a partnership between the Poverty Task Force's Food Security Action Group and the Grey Bruce Health Unit. It was funded by the United Way of Bruce Grey.

Local conversations were hosted by food banks and engaged a wide range of community members to discuss their local food systems and envision changes for their community. The project observed a variety of community opportunities to respond to food insecurity.

A [Full Project Report](#) was completed as well as individual community conversations: [Southgate Conversation](#), [Kincardine Conversation](#), [Town of Blue Mountains Conversation](#), [South Bruce Peninsula Conversation](#), [Saugeen Shores and Saugeen First Nation Conversation](#)

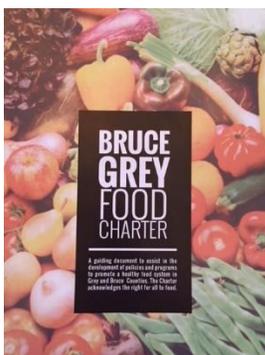


The Food Security Hub Project wrapped up on September 25th with community members from across Grey Bruce joining us for our [Fall Food Gathering 2019](#). At the Fall Food Gathering we advanced our [Second Harvest Grey Bruce program](#) with a new partnership with [FoodRescue.ca](#). Many local food banks are signing up to the program and the Owen Sound Zehrs has joined as a new donor.

We also formalized a Community Gardens Network between community gardeners in Grey Bruce which will [exchange more technical expertise](#) under the leadership of Simona Freibergova.

And we facilitated more food banks to sign up to the [Good Food Organizations](#) initiative – a project of Community Food Centres Canada. The initiative supports food security organizations by increasing their capacity to offer healthy and dignified food programs.

The Bruce Grey Food Charter



Laura Needham, Grey Bruce Public Health and Jill Umbach presented the latest data related to healthy food systems to Bruce County. And sought endorsement for the Bruce Grey Food Charter. Next presentations are scheduled for West Grey Council.

Jill Umbach and Laura Needham presented a national webinar via Tamarack Institute entitled [From Band-Aids to Bridges: Transforming Approaches to Good Food](#). Some 72 poverty reduction tables joined the webinar which generated a large amount of discussion.

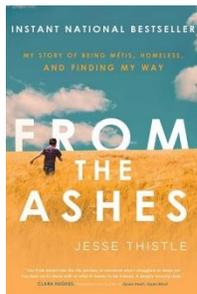
Community Voices and Housing Action Group



Informed by the Lived/Living Experience Advisory Committee of Tamarack Institute and interviews with our Community Voices a [Guide](#) was released in 2019 to support poverty-reduction groups to meaningfully engage people with lived/living experience. It celebrates the potential that can be unlocked when these individuals are included and empowered to drive anti-poverty work.

In partnership with the **Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Grey Bruce** a one-day training was held for local organizations utilizing the tools within the Guide. The Poverty Task Force Coordinator and a Community Voices Co-Chair led the afternoon session.

Community Voices members have been active in the [RentSafe Tenants Network](#) and Research Team; the Poverty Task Force Coordinator is an Advisory Member and many of our Housing Action Group members have been actively involved as well in the [Rentsafe/Above Standard Housing Project](#). A [We Are All Neighbours](#) report of the Rentsafe research on equity-focused Intersectoral Practices (EquIP) for Housing and Health Equity in Owen Sound was released at a RentSafe Roundtable organized in October 2019.



Members of the Poverty Task Force's Community Voices and Housing Action Group partners participated in a **Giive Circle** with author [Jesse Thistle](#). Jesse presented his work on the development of a [Indigenous Definition of Homelessness](#) with [The Homeless Hub](#). Jesse also shared his personal story and his new book **From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way**. Jesse Thistle - who has traveled all across Canada - commented that Giive was a powerful project and its Circles an experience that he had not seen in any other communities across Canada.

Giive is an unique exciting Indigenous led, inter-agency collaboration brought to us by the staff at [M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre](#). The project aims at reducing Indigenous homelessness. Giive is centred on fostering a coordinated housing and life stabilization response to Indigenous specific housing needs and preferences in Grey Bruce.

Giive has successfully established and sustained an Indigenous led, inter-agency collaboration with 11 organizations while strengthening relationships and promoting trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. It has also facilitated a referral process and established inter-agency agreements to better serve Indigenous peoples living off-reserve. A recent [Evaluation Report](#) highlights the work being done.

Giive Circles incorporate cultural safety training, collaborative case management and relationship building to increase Indigenous leadership with improved collaboration and understanding of Indigenous practices, which ultimately lead to the prevention of Indigenous homelessness.

Bridges Action Group



Four **Getting Ahead** groups were completed this year in Markdale, Wiarton, Port Elgin and Owen Sound for a total of 36 groups graduated in the last 10 years – 35 graduates (Bruce County) and 211 (Grey County) for a total of 246 graduates. One **Building Emotional Resources** group was completed in Hanover. Full reports for each group sessions were submitted to Bruce County and Grey County respectively.

A new Getting Ahead Facilitators Network has been started with Grey Bruce and Simcoe-Muskoka facilitators. Two meetings have taken place in Wasaga Beach to exchange methodology and tools. A proposal for a Circles Pilot was submitted by the United Way of Bruce Grey to the Ontario Trillium Foundation in 2019 for Spring 2020 implementation.

Jill Umbach, Shawna Cox and Renee Schlonies delivered Bridges Out of Poverty Training (2 hours to full day) to a variety of community groups, church groups and Grey County Social Services.

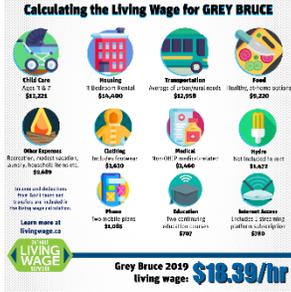
Income & Employment Security Action Group



In 2019 we worked with 211 to maintain the [Grey Bruce Income Tax Clinic Listing](#) and released a media release on available resources across Bruce and Grey Counties. With the trend of the government flowing more income to low income households through tax credits it is paramount to keep promoting the use of free income tax clinics geographically and year round services.

The Grey Bruce Community Volunteer Income Tax Clinic Network held a one-day workshop with volunteers and coordinators on October 23rd. The CRA Outreach Worker that joined us for the Network workshop informed us that some 45,000 people in Grey Bruce are eligible to use the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program but only 2% are doing so. We continue to collect more data locally related to the use of these free clinics and to identify barriers to filing. The CRA outreach worker for Grey Bruce is offering more in-person meetings and trainings.

Living Wage Campaign



The Action Group has also expanded its employment agencies' membership with a renewed focus on precarious work and the living wage. The United Way of Bruce Grey released its [Living Wage for 2019](#) at the end of the year and the IESAG group will be engaging with employers in 2020 to become certified.

Advocacy work on precarious work has been strengthened by the first Employee Survey by the Four County Labour Planning Market Board. [Employee Survey results](#) were shared with the IESAG group by researchers. The discussion held is leading to a new research project to delve deeper into precarious work in Grey Bruce by the Planning Board. It has also led to deeper discussions with various employment agencies and Georgian College on life stabilization and job readiness as well as precarious work practices.

In 2019, the **Rural Pathways for Newcomer Women in Grey Bruce Project** joined the Action Group. The Pathways Project is a 17-month (August 2019 – December 2020) regional pilot project to develop, implement, and evaluate new pathways to employment for visible minority newcomer women in a rural region without settlement services. This has deepened discussions on this vulnerable population and support needed to ensure employment.

Moving Forward on Health Equity Action Group



The Health Equity Action Group officially launched our [health equity screening tool](#) along with 3 training videos. The tool and video are available online along with Grey Bruce resources and best practices.

Hard copies of the screening tool were printed with funds carried over from 2018 and are available from the Grey Bruce Health Unit. We are tracking the number of health organizations that have completed the training and how they are using it in their organization. Most recently, we worked with Bruce County Human Services department (60 people) to deliver the training and understand how they can use this in their work.

Data Generation for Bruce County and Grey County

Community awareness and education on poverty-related issues has seen the Poverty Task Force Coordinator and members responding to community groups, churches, students and agencies with information and resources. The Poverty Task Force is engaged with projects that generate new local data and our role is to ensure that vulnerable groups are identified and support projects that take a poverty lens.



The Poverty Task Force is a member of the Community Foundation Grey Bruce's **Vital Signs Advisory Committee** that began work in 2015 and produced the first [Vital Signs Report](#) in October 2016. In 2019, we supported a new [Vital Signs Youth Report](#).



The Poverty Task Force is a founding member of [BGDISC.ca](#) and actively encourages its partners to join **BGDISC** and contribute data to make this a robust Open Data Portal.

While the Ontario government is developing a new **Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy** the Federal government has released its [Dimensions of Poverty Hub](#) in July 2019– Canada's official dashboard for monitoring poverty reduction. The Hub tracks progress beyond the Canadian poverty line ((MBM), across 12 indicators organized into Dignity, Opportunity and Inclusion, and Resilience and Security. It supports the government of Canada to monitor the ability of individuals and families to better meet basic needs and move closer to the modest standard of living of the poverty line.

A similar dashboard is being developed on BGDISC by the Poverty Task Force and will be published in 2020.



The Poverty Task Force is a member of the **Canadian Index of Wellbeing Survey Advisory Committee** for Grey Bruce. The survey was carried out in 2018 and the Survey Report was released in June 2019.

Social Media

We are working to refresh our Poverty Task Force website and our social media branding. We shall be creating more visuals on the collective impact of the Poverty Task Force. "Our Voice is Power" has been added as our tagline.

- Poverty Task Force WordPress [website](#) with blogposts of ongoing activities and subscription to new e-newsletter (706 followers)
- Poverty Task Force [Facebook page](#) (730 followers)
- Poverty Task Force [twitter account](#) (581 followers)
- Community Voices closed Facebook page (7 members)
- Getting Ahead to Stay Ahead closed Facebook page (52 members)
- Bridges Out of Poverty Facebook page (50 followers)

WEBSITE: [HTTP://POVERTYTASKFORCE.COM](http://povertytaskforce.com)

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FACEBOOK: BRUCEGREYPOVERTYTASKFORCE