



United Way  
Central & Northern  
Vancouver Island

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## Vital Signs Project Launched to Track Nanaimo's Quality of Life

**Nanaimo, BC** – May 26, 2014 – Work has begun on *Nanaimo's Vital Signs*, a new report card on the health of our city as a place to live, learn, work and grow. The Vital Signs project is a partnership between the Nanaimo Foundation, United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island (UWCNVI) and the City of Nanaimo, and will also involve Vancouver Island University. Island Savings is the lead sponsor for the project.

Tim Mawdsley, director with the Nanaimo Community Foundation and manager of Island Savings' Woodgrove Centre branch, explained that, "The Nanaimo Foundation's strategic plan includes Vital Signs since we are committed to increasing our role in the Nanaimo community. This project—tested by community foundations across the country—is an important tool that allows us to engage with the community in order to increase our understanding of Nanaimo's issues and trends and what our key priorities should be going forward."

Vital Signs is part of a national initiative that was launched in 2006 by the Community Foundations of Canada. In 2013, 26 community foundations from across Canada participated in the program. This is the first time Vital Signs has been done in Nanaimo, although Victoria and other communities have been reporting for many years.

"Island Savings is very proud to support this research," said Randy Bertsch, Chief Operations Officer with Island Savings. "This kind of annual check-up is an essential tool for starting conversations in Nanaimo about the most pressing issues—and greatest opportunities—facing residents today. As a result, it will no doubt guide Island Savings' ongoing investment program in Central Island communities."

*Nanaimo's Vital Signs* will annually identify trends and assign grades in 10 key areas that are critical to Nanaimo's quality of life: standard of living, safety and security, health, learning, housing, getting started, getting around, arts and culture, work and the economy. Information will be gathered from Island Health, Census data and other local research sources that are already collecting data, and will be compiled and presented in a reader-friendly, easy-to-use format.

"Partnering on Vital Signs is such a win/win for our donors and the community as a whole. United Way already tracks issues and invests in 33 effective programs in the Central Island this year, but we have wanted to combine our findings with others producing local data. Better data means more informed ways to tackle pressing social issues and to help galvanize community investment," said Signy Madden, Executive Director of UWCNVI.

For Nanaimo's Social Planner, John Horn, the Vital Signs report card provides a needed follow up to the city's Social Status report update in 2007. "The Vital Signs report card is more comprehensive than other reports we have developed. It can track economic and environmental trends, health,

learning, safety and a number of other factors that all contribute to the social health of the community.”

Nanaimo and all the other communities across Canada producing Vital Signs will release their reports on October 7th. For more information, contact the Nanaimo Community Foundation at 250-753-1124 or go to [vitalsignscanada.ca](http://vitalsignscanada.ca).

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### **Nanaimo Foundation**

Since 1982, the Nanaimo Foundation has been connecting visionary donors with causes that truly matter. Every year, with our donors, we help fund capital projects and pilot projects—large and small—in support of areas such as arts and culture, education, children and youth, environment, animal welfare, community health and social development. We collaborate with other charities and non-profits to provide funding for innovative projects to solve larger community issues.

### **Island Savings**

Island Savings is the fastest-growing financial institution based on Vancouver Island. For over 60 years, Island Savings has offered a complete range of products and services and has contributed to the financial and economic well-being of our members, employees and communities. By investing in local businesses and supporting community organizations, we're working to make the Islands an even better place to live.

### **United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island**

Since 1958, United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island (UWCNVI) has been mobilizing collective action to strengthen our community's social support network so that every person has access to the help they need during a crisis and for the long term. Thanks to the hard work and generosity of thousands of community heroes, this year UWCNVI invested in 50 charities and 60 programs in the Central Island, Comox Valley and Campbell River.

For additional information, please contact:

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### **United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island**

**Change starts here**

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