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United Way
of Thunder Bay

2008 Our Quality of Life Report Thunder Bay



This is a
Summary

To view the
complete report
please visit

www.ThunderBaySurvey.com

Welcome

We are pleased to share the 2008 "Our Quality of Life Report" with you – the members of our community!

This is the inaugural issue of what we hope will be an ongoing community report card. We hope that it stimulates discussion and serves as a guide to planning our future together.

The Our Quality of Life Project is a new research-based initiative developed through the combined efforts of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, the United Way of Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay Ventures, the City of Thunder Bay and Lakehead University.

The intent of the Project is to identify and track issues and trends related to key quality of life indicators as they pertain to Thunder Bay. By bringing together a broad range of social and economic measures into a single, accessible report, a clearer picture can be established of

Thunder Bay's strengths and opportunities, as well as areas that may require greater attention.

The 2008 Our Quality of Life Report covers a range of demographic information and key quality of life indicators. These indicators, while not an exhaustive list, represent a broad array of measures that – combined together – are recognized as important in establishing a profile of the "state of affairs" of our city. The data for the Report is drawn from a wide variety of municipal, provincial and national databases.

An equally important component of the report is the "voice" of citizens of Thunder Bay. In order to compare the statistical data with public opinion, an online survey was available for citizens to complete. The Quality of Life Survey was based upon survey questions that had been developed and tested extensively in other cities. The survey was made available for citizens to complete online between mid-September and the end of

October, 2008. In all, a total of 1081 citizens completed the survey.

We look forward to hearing about the discussion and debate that this report generates. Please let us know what you think. Feel free to give us feedback through our website at www.thunderbaysurvey.com.

Remember, the indicators of Our Quality of Life are more than just the ones included here. So, let us know what you would like to see included in the future. We look forward to working together to continue to make Thunder Bay a great place to live, work and play!

Sincerely

The Project Task Force

Meet the Task Force

Paul Wolfe, Executive Director, Thunder Bay Community Foundation

Joanne Kembel, Executive Director, United Way of Thunder Bay

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About the Author

David Tranter, Ph.D is the Director of the School of Social Work and the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences at Lakehead University. Dr. Tranter's teaching focus is in the area of personal and social transformation. His research and practice interests include program evaluation, community capacity building, social development, mediation and conflict resolution.

Thank You to the Project Supporters



About the Quality of Life Project

The Quality of Life Indicators

The Our Quality of Life Report is based on 12 social and economic indicators, as well as general demographic information about Thunder Bay. The indicators represent a broad array of measures that provide a snapshot of Thunder Bay's Quality of Life, as well as allows for comparison with other cities and provincial/national averages. The indicators also allows for comparison over time to track trends and assess progress. The intent is to provide a Quality of Life assessment of areas in which Thunder Bay is performing well, and areas that may require more attention.

The Research Methodology

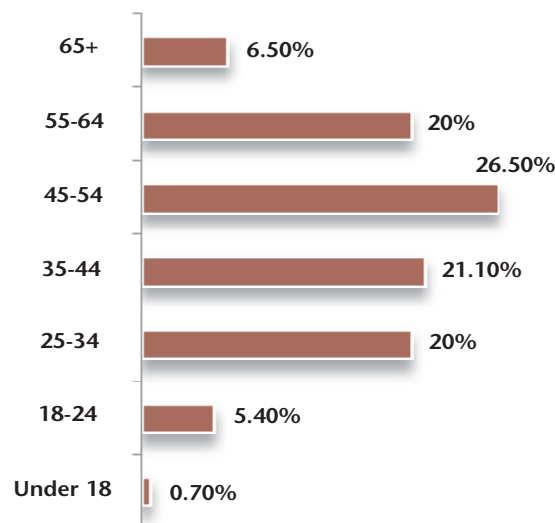
The data for the Report is drawn from a wide variety of municipal, provincial and national databases. A significant amount of information was drawn from the 2001 and 2005 Census data compiled by Statistics Canada. A complete list of data sources is provided in the references section at the end of the Report.

Where Census data was used, the numbers indicated reflect the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) rather than just the City of Thunder Bay. The Thunder Bay CMA measure was used to better reflect the population of the greater Thunder Bay area which includes the communities surrounding the city. In some cases, where appropriate, the numbers represent only the city of Thunder Bay, for example in the case of transit use. Where possible, comparative data is also provided including measures for previous years, provincial and national averages, and measures from other cities. Where these numbers are not provided, it is usually because the data is either unavailable or not useful for comparison.

The Online Survey

In all, a total of 1081 citizens completed the survey. In respect to the age of respondents there was a fairly broad range of people who took the time to complete the survey. In most of the age groups, there were well over 200 respondents per group. Unfortunately a relatively small percentage (0.7%) of respondents was under 18. If an online survey is conducted again in the future, it will be important to look at ways to encourage the youth of Thunder Bay to be more involved.

There were also a relatively high proportion of females who completed the survey as compared to males. Almost three quarters (72.7%) of respondents were female.



Age of Quality of Life Survey Respondents*

In respect to the diversity of household income among respondents, there was a fairly even distribution. All income ranges were well represented with no one income range representing a clear majority. More than one in five (22%) respondents had a household income level below \$40,000 per year.

In respect to other significant demographic indicators of survey respondents, 6.8% identified themselves as Aboriginal. Eight percent of the total respondents were former residents of Thunder Bay who were currently residing in other cities.

Of those respondents living in Thunder Bay, 46.6% had lived in Thunder Bay their entire lives, while 39% had lived in Thunder Bay for more than ten years, and 9% had lived in Thunder Bay less than five years.

Eighty eight percent of respondents owned a home, and 55.4% were married.

No survey is without limitations. It is important to note that the online nature of its delivery may have limited the participation of some individuals and groups. Though many efforts were made to engage social agencies to assist individuals who may otherwise face barriers to participation. It is important to recognize that some populations may still not be fully represented in the survey.

As well, since the survey was voluntary, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to the population of Thunder Bay. The high response rate and wide distribution of respondents adds significant credibility and meaning to the survey results; however, the survey methodology was not scientific in nature and therefore is not necessarily reflective of the opinions of the entire population. What can be said with certainty is that the survey reflects the opinions of a fairly broad range of 1081 individuals.

This is a summary of Our Quality of Life Report 2008. To view the complete report visit our website.

The Future

The 2008 Our Quality of Life Project is the first of what is hoped to be an ongoing reporting of key quality of life indicators and the opinion of citizens. While a wide range of indicators were included in this report, many other potential areas of individual and community life could be considered. It is hoped that, in future Our Quality of Life reports, other social and economic indicators will be included and examined in greater depth.



This Summary and the Full Report

This summary contains much of Our Quality of Life Report's first thirteen pages. The complete report is 46 pages long and contains detailed research on each of the twelve key social indicators along with dozens of graphs and charts. Many of the responses and comments collected during the online survey are also included within each of the various key social indicator sections.

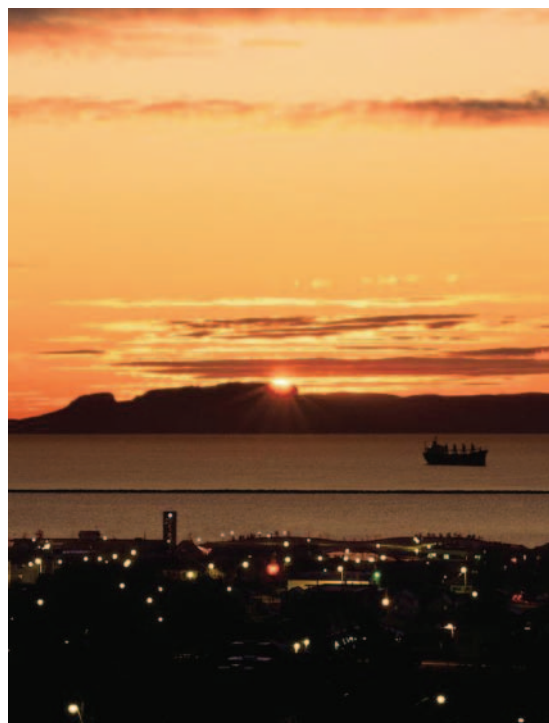
We encourage you to visit our website and review the full report. The website address is at the bottom of this page.

The 2008 Our Quality of Life Report is packed with fascinating details about life in Thunder Bay. The information in this Report is provided in a "just the facts" manner free of interpretation or spin. We encourage you to read it through and draw your own conclusions about our collective strengths and weaknesses. You will undoubtedly have your own opinions about which indicators are most important and which seem to most reflect your experience of life in Thunder Bay.

While many details of the Report will be discussed and debated, there were some indicators that seemed to be fairly clear areas of strengths for us, while in other areas we still have a way to go. For this reason we have prepared a brief summary of the "good news" and the "areas that require further attention" of the 2008 Our Quality of Life Report.

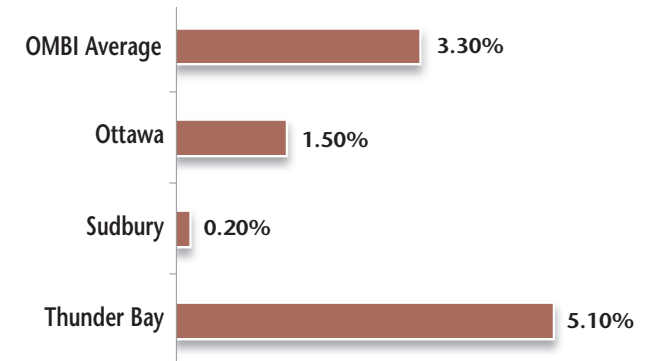
Some Good News

An increase in population – Our population grew by almost 1% at a time when Northern Ontario experienced an overall decline in population.



A decrease in youth outmigration – Our youth outmigration rate slowed significantly from a high of 12.4% in 2001, down to 5% in 2006.

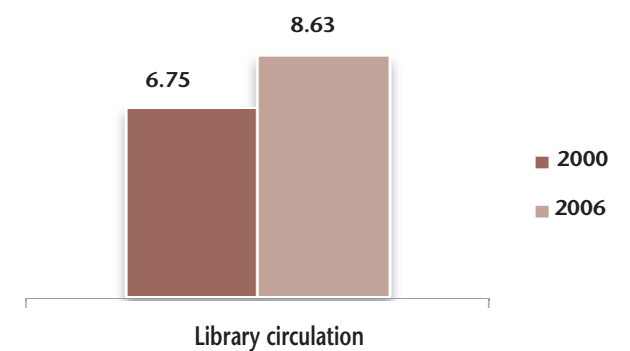
A city with plentiful parkland – 5.1% of our city is allocated for natural and maintained parkland, compared to an Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) median for municipalities of 3.3%



Percentage of total municipality allocated for natural and maintained parkland*

Active city recreation program use – 10.1% of Thunder Bay citizens participate in registration-based city recreation programs, compared to a OMBI median of 6.2%.

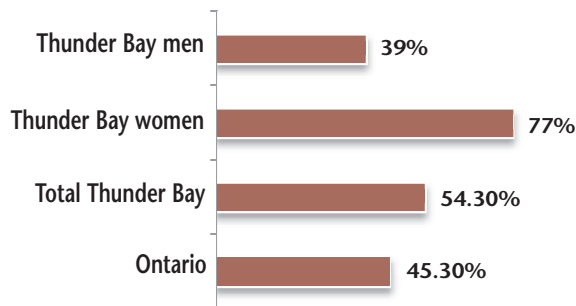
An increase in library use – in 2006, our libraries had a circulation rate of 8.63 items per capita, up from



Thunder Bay Library Circulation Based on Items Per Capita*

Safer roads and getting even safer – We had 213 traffic offences per 100,000 in 2007. That is less than the provincial average of 253, and down significantly from 2005 when it was 253 per 100,000.

A city that volunteers – 54.3% of us volunteer our time to worthy causes. That’s significantly higher than the provincial average of 45.3%.



Volunteer Rate, 2004

The air really is better up here – Almost all of our days in 2007 were “good” or “very good” in respect to air quality – and we had no “poor” days. In Toronto, there were 55 “moderate” days and 7 “poor” days during the same period.

A strong sense of community belonging – 71% of us say that we have a “strong” or “somewhat strong” sense of belonging to our community, compared to the provincial average of 63%.

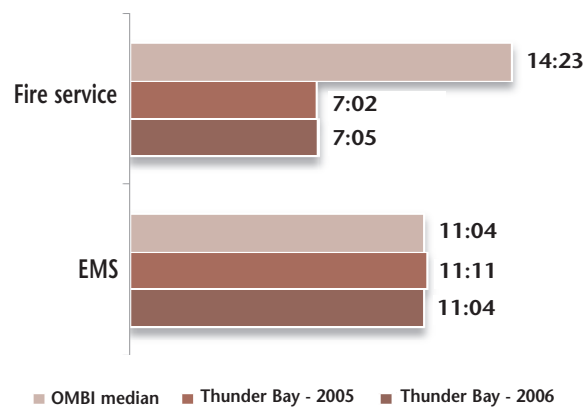
Success for our Aboriginal post secondary students – We have a higher rate of college and university completion among our aboriginal students than the provincial average.

We live beside one of the biggest lakes in the world and we still conserve water – 24% of us use rain barrels to conserve water compared to the national average of 11%. 39% of us use water saving toilets, compared to 34% nationally. We are just slightly below the national average when it comes to water saving shower heads.

More affordable rental accommodation – It is less expensive to rent an apartment in Thunder Bay than in most other cities in Ontario. A two bedroom apartment here will cost on average \$709 per month, compared to the provincial average of \$924.

More affordable price of homes – In 2007, the average home here cost \$123,237. The average price of a home in Ontario was \$245,230. Across Canada it was \$307,0265.

A speedy fire service response time – It typically takes 7 minutes for the fire service to respond to a call in Thunder Bay compared to a median response time in OMBI municipalities that is more than 14 minutes.



EMS and Fire service response times

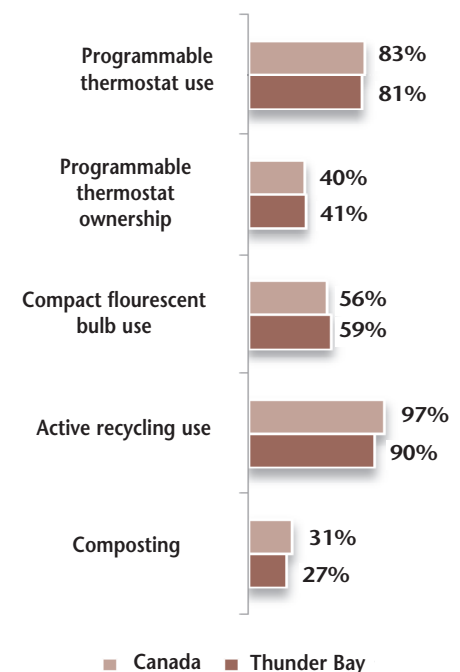
Some Areas for Further Attention

An income gap for many – Although our overall poverty rate is comparable to the provincial average, we have higher than average rates of poverty for Aboriginal people, lone parent families, unattached individuals, and those with disabilities.



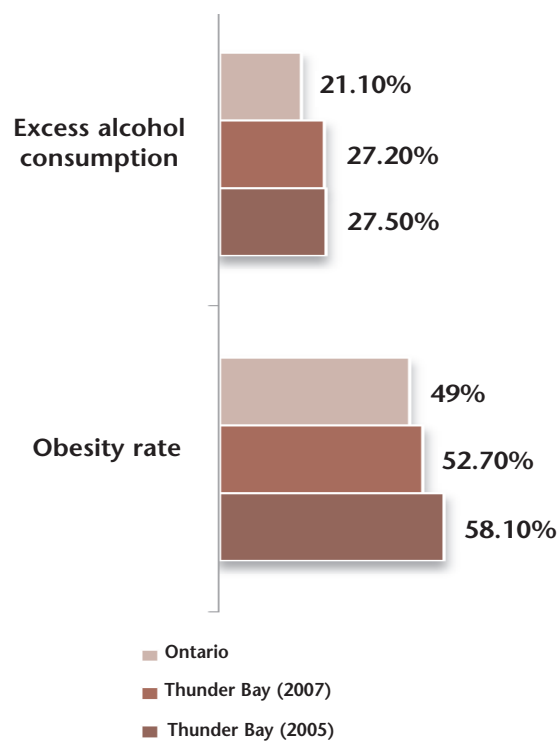
Percentage of lone parent families with children age 18 and under living in poverty based on the pre-tax Low Income Cut-off

We’re not recycling as much as we should – We remain behind the province when it comes to recycling, solid waste diversion, compact fluorescent bulb use, and programmable thermostat use.



Our roads are rough – Thunder Bay is a geographically spread out city with a lot of roads per capita – this can create challenges to maintain. In 2006, 54% of municipal roads (OMBI) were rated either “good” or “very good”, compared to only 13% of our roads.

It’s time to get in shape – Our rates of smoking, exposure to second hand smoke, alcohol consumption, and obesity are all higher than the provincial average. Our life expectancy is 77.1 years, compared to the provincial average of 79.7 years.



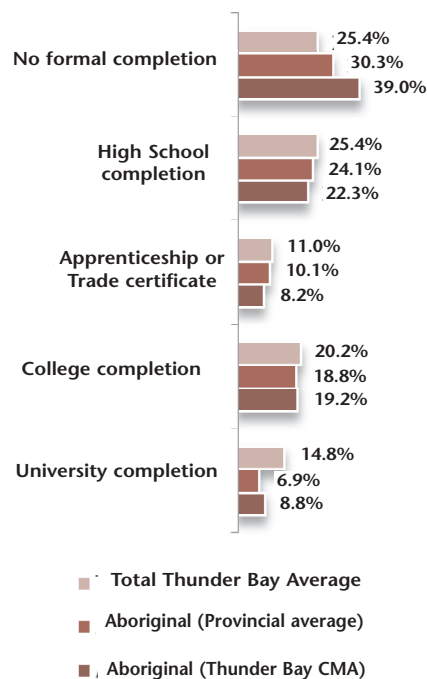
Alcohol consumption/obesity rates for Thunder Bay

Our crime rate – Thunder Bay continues to have a higher than average rate of violent crime and property crime, although our rate of property crime has been consistently going down. Youth crime in our city is more than twice the provincial average.

Financial pressure for some households – Unlike individual and family income, the median household income of Thunder Bay did not match the province. In 2005, the median household income was \$53,686,

an amount significantly below the provincial average of \$60,455.

High School completion among aboriginal students – 39% of our Aboriginal population have not completed high school, compared to the provincial aboriginal average of 30%, and overall Thunder Bay average of 25%.



Our immigration rate – A total of 680 people immigrated to Thunder Bay between 2001 and 2006. This number represents 0.6% of the total population of Thunder Bay. During the same period, 580,740 people immigrated to Ontario from another country, representing 4.8% of the total population. In total, 10.4% of Thunder Bay’s population immigrated from another country, compared to 28.3% of Ontario’s population.

About Our Community

Thunder Bay is a city centrally located within Northwestern Ontario. At a 2006 census population of 109,140, it is the largest municipality in

Northwestern Ontario, and the second most populous in Northern Ontario.

A further 13,767 people live on the outskirts of Thunder Bay comprising the census metropolitan area which includes a variety of other municipalities, townships and communities.

The census metropolitan area of Thunder Bay has a total population of 122,907 of which 48.4% are male and 51.6% are female. The average age of a resident of Thunder Bay as of 2006 was 41.8, compared to the average of 39.5 for Canada as a whole (and compared to 39.1 and 37.2 respectively in 2001).*

Thunder Bay’s average age has increased at a rate faster than the national average largely as a result of the combined effects of youth out migration and an aging population; however this seems to have slowed in recent years. In 2001, 15% of Thunder Bay’s population was 65+, compared to the provincial average of 12.9%. In 2006, 16% of Thunder Bay’s population was 65+, compared to 13.6% across the province.*

Youth out migration has reportedly slowed even more significantly from a rate of 12.4% in 2001, to 5% in



This is a summary of Our Quality of Life Report 2008. To view the complete report visit our website.

2006. However Thunder Bay continues to experience a decreasing youth population.*

In 2006, 29.7% of residents were under 24, compared to 31.3% in 2001. Across the province, 31.6% of the population was under 24 years of age in 2006.*

Between 2001 and 2006, Thunder Bay's overall population increased by 0.8%, compared to an average growth rate of 6.6% for Ontario and 5.4% for Canada. Although Thunder Bay's rate of growth was small by provincial and national standards, it defied the trend in Northern Ontario which suffered an overall population reduction during this period.*

A significant and growing proportion of residents in Thunder Bay self identify as Aboriginal, comprising over 8% of the total population. In fact, the net population growth of Thunder Bay between the 2001 census and the 2006 census is largely attributable to the growth in our Aboriginal population. During this period, the total non Aboriginal population decreased by 1%, while our Aboriginal population grew by 22.6%.*



While Thunder Bay is ethnically diverse, the number of visible minorities and immigrants fall well below the provincial average. The total visible minority population (excluding aboriginal peoples) for Thunder Bay in 2006 comprised 2.7% of the population compared to an Ontario average of 22.8%. In 2001, the percentage of visible minorities in Thunder Bay was 2.2%.*

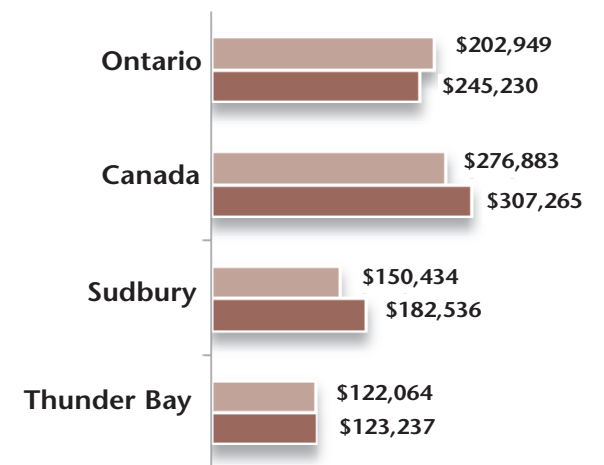
Immigrants (i.e., those people who are or who have ever been landed immigrants) comprise 10.4% of the population compared to a provincial average of 28.3%.*

Thunder Bay is home to 12,825 people of Finnish descent, the highest concentration of persons of Finnish origin per capita in Canada, and the second largest Finnish population in Canada after Toronto.*

According to the City of Thunder Bay's Annual Accessibility Plan, approximately 17% of Thunder Bay residents have a disability, a number slightly higher than the 16% average across the province.*

In respect to employment, sales and service occupations are the most common employers making up 27% of the jobs in our community (compared to 27.6% in 2001). Business, finance and administrative occupations are the second most common at 16.8% (compared to 15.5% in 2001). Trades, transport and equipment occupation were a close third at 16.6% (down from 18.4% in 2001).*

Thunder Bay families have a median income that is slightly lower than the provincial average at \$68,397 compared to provincial average of \$69,415. The gap between Thunder Bay and the province has closed somewhat since the 2001 census in which the median family income in Thunder was \$59,580, compared to the provincial average of \$61,024. However, the median income for lone parent families with females at the head remains significantly lower for Thunder Bay at \$32,291, as compared to the provincial average of \$36,496.*



Average house prices 2006-2007

For individual incomes, the median 2005 income for Thunder Bay was \$27,546 compared to the provincial median of \$27,258. In 2001, the median individual income for Thunder Bay was \$23,607 and \$24,816 for the province as a whole. Women in Thunder Bay continue to be paid more poorly than their male counterparts reporting a median income of \$21,459 as compared to men who earned \$35,903. This disparity was slightly larger than the provincial average of \$21,669 for women and \$34,454 for men.*

Finally, a total of 71.5% of Thunder Bay's per capita income came from employment (versus government supplements), compared to the provincial median of 77.4%. This is down from the 2001 census in which 73.7% of Thunder Bay's per capital income came from employment as compared to 78.7% throughout the province.*

***All references are included in the Full Report which is available at www.ThunderBaySurvey.com**



United Way of Thunder Bay is committed to developing the wellbeing of the community of Thunder Bay and the surrounding region. In addition to providing vital service programs delivered through 26 local service agencies, the United Way is working very hard to increase the capacity of our community to care for itself.

United Way funds provide services that range from counselling for emotional health and mental well being, to programs that protect the battered family and help the chronically ill through their last journey. The physically disabled are assisted through a variety of programs to support independence and to make their lives as satisfying as possible.

A long history of giving based on community needs analysis has made the United Way of Thunder Bay a leader in understanding gaps in services. This knowledge led to collaboration with the Lakehead Social Planning Council to implement the 211 telephone information referral line. United Way's direction of the Action for Neighbourhood Change initiative, in partnership with the Federal Government, led to the formation of Evergreen: A United Neighbourhood, bringing residents together to foster pride in their neighbourhood.

Partnering with the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, City of Thunder Bay, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay Ventures and Intercity Shopping Centre to develop the Quality of Life Project was a natural step for United Way. The partnership reflects our determination to provide solutions based on a clear understanding of what is missing and important in the lives of our citizens. The first United Way was born in 1887 in Denver, Colorado. The silver mines had closed and people wandered the streets hungry and homeless. Clergy joined forces to make a united request to the community to offer assistance to the less fortunate. Many things have changed over the last 121 years. Services provided now extend well beyond food and shelter, although these are still needed by many in our community. Because caring agencies are so much a part of our day to day life, the recipient may not even be aware that United Way financial support is ensuring that this help is available. The scope of services provided is so wide that one in three people will be touched by at least one United Way funded agency each year. And that is pretty remarkable!

The Thunder Bay Community Foundation helps facilitate and promote local philanthropy. Our mission is to provide opportunities for the citizens of Thunder Bay to invest in the enrichment of their own communities by establishing permanent endowment funds.

Since 1971 the Community Foundation has helped dozens of individuals create financial legacies that alleviate suffering, support the arts, provide scholarships and foster growth and innovation in science and technology. Today the Community Foundation holds in trust almost \$5 Million that has been donated by local citizens to establish a variety of legacy funds. The original donation of \$100,000 came from **Ms. Prue Morton** and her identity remained a secret for 35 years until her death.

The Community Foundation is governed by a volunteer board of nine Trustees who are chosen from various sectors in the community. These Trustees oversee the investment and disbursement of the Community Foundation's funds. Since 1971 the Community Foundation has disbursed grants and scholarships in excess of \$2.6 Million. At the same time the capital of the Foundation has grown steadily.

The Community Foundation is also rich in stories. Many of our donations have come from citizens of passion and vision. Some examples: Helen L. Dewar, a former high school educator, established an academic scholarship and a bursary for medical research. Edith Dyke, a former lawyer, endowed a significant portion of the Community Foundation's general fund. When the Thunder Bay Lawn Bowling Club wound up operations the property was sold and the proceeds were donated to the Community Foundation. Roy S. Rodgers and Geraldine R. Rodgers, a former tradesman and educator, established five scholarships for students in region. Recently, Ross Wilson, a retired educator, established a science scholarship at his former school and Dr. Penny Petrone established a fund to assist persons with disabilities.

If you are interested in personal philanthropy or leaving a legacy within the District of Thunder Bay the Community Foundation is pleased to help you along the way.