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NEWS RELEASE

SURVEY says...CITIZENS OF THE REGION ARE HAPPY!
Well-being survey results in a Happiness Index for Greater Victoria

Victoria, BC (February 25, 2009) – A group of eight organizations from Greater Victoria, called the Happiness Index Partnership, announced the results of a well-being survey that says citizens of the region rate highly on an international scale used to measure happiness.

Happiness is getting used more as the notion of well-being is recognized as being central to our conceptions of health and healthy communities. For example, the definition of health that is used by the World Health Organization gives primacy to well-being - “Health is a state of complete **physical, mental and social well-being** and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

Most definitions of well-being have emphasized the notion of living a happy and satisfying life. This notion has become the primary theme in the measurement of the concept in recent years - self-reported happiness and life-satisfaction. These are also the concepts that are used in the Capital Region Well-being Survey.

Among the findings, our biggest challenge exists in our ability to find work-life balance. We have a mixed performance in material well-being. While we scored well in freedom from deprivation in things such as food, housing, clothing and medicines, we scored substantially lower in financial satisfaction, which describes our current financial situation as well as our future financial security.

The survey showed very positive results in social and community vitality, including social supports, family and friends and interpersonal trust. We also scored reasonably well on inclusion in terms of ethnicity, race, religion or values.

Following today’s release of the region’s Happiness Index, the partnership also announced an upcoming community forum to be held in Victoria on April 21st which will include keynote speaker John Helliwell from the Canadian Institute of Advance Research and UBC.

Approximately 6,600 residents of Greater Victoria were invited to participate in a random-sample survey that measured a series of well-being and life satisfaction contributors. The contributors in the survey included health, material circumstances, social and community vitality, cultural vitality, time balance, governance and quality of environment.

The results were compiled by BC Stats and analyzed by the Public and Population Health Observatory at VIHA and research staff at the Community Council.

The Happiness Index Partnership is comprised of the Capital Regional District, City of Victoria, Community Council, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, United Way, University of Victoria, Vancouver Island Health Authority and the Victoria Foundation.

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