

Grand Bend Area

Vital Signs®



Vital Signs® is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in areas critical to quality of life. **Vital Signs®** is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.



Community Check-Up 2019

The communities that Grand Bend Community Foundation serves are strong, vibrant, and full of potential. The Foundation supports organizations that are making our communities even better. To do that well, we need to understand the needs, gaps and challenges.

This report gathers data from a variety of sources including Statistics Canada, local health units, United Way, and the Connected Rural Communities Collaborative led by the Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre. The report also includes comments from community leaders about the needs they see.

This is just a starting point – a handful of data and perspectives that we hope will frame useful discussions in the future.

If you'd like to be part of these discussions, please let us know by contacting Pat Morden at grandbendcf@gmail.com.

"A significant factor in this area is the lack of reasonable graduated care for people in their senior years. Because of the lack of support, people who need a small amount of support to thrive at home get almost none and carry on with consequent detriments to health, nutrition, mobility and socialization, until often a calamity causes a precipitous exit to another community."

Rev. Dr. Kate Crawford, Huron Shores United Church

If Lambton County was a village of 100

32 people

will be 65 years or older in 2036

compared to 21 people in 2016



Seniors in Grand Bend

51%

27%

The population in Central Ontario will grow by 27% between now and 2040 while the population in Lambton and Huron counties is predicted to **decline**.

"In our communities many people are aging with stress and experiencing isolation and poverty. We need to recognize and understand and develop programs to help. At the same time, young families can't afford to live in Grand Bend. There is no transit and many young people can't afford to run a car. As a result, business owners can't get the employees they need." ~ **Glen Baillie, Business Owner**

To learn more about the Foundation, visit our website at www.grandbendcommunityfoundation.ca

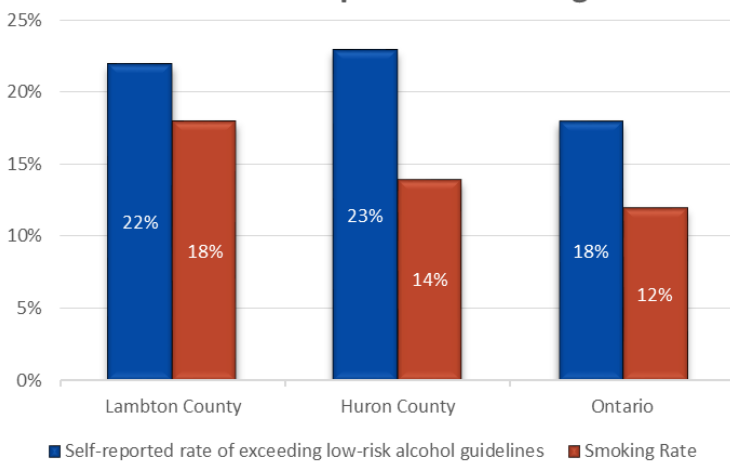


“The biggest need I see is affordable seniors housing. We’re coming to a crisis where the seniors in our community will be forced to leave because they’re not able to survive without additional supports. Transportation is the other big need.”

Brian Hall, Community Leader and GBCF Board Member

Rural dwellers often have less access to health services, particularly specialist care.

Alcohol Consumption & Smoking Rates



Post secondary education opens the door to a wide range of career options.

Bachelor’s Degree or Higher

Ontario **32%**
 Lambton County **16%**
 Huron County **11%**

In our region, university graduation rates are significantly lower than in Ontario.

Training in the trades is well above the Ontario average.

People in Huron and Lambton Counties are more likely to be overweight, to smoke, and to drink heavily than the Ontario average, increasing their risk of chronic disease. Youth in our region report lower levels of mental health status than the Ontario average. There is also a higher rate of low birthweight babies in Lambton County – 2.94 per 100,000, compared to 1.96 for Ontario.

“Three issues consistently come up in our client satisfaction surveys – how do I eat healthier, how do I support my physical health, and how do I deal with interpersonal stress. We also have to ensure that no matter where you’re from or what your circumstances are, we support one another in an inclusive community where everyone belongs.”

Cate Melito, Executive Director, Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre

How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place in your community?

6% ALWAYS

17% OFTEN

42% SOMETIMES

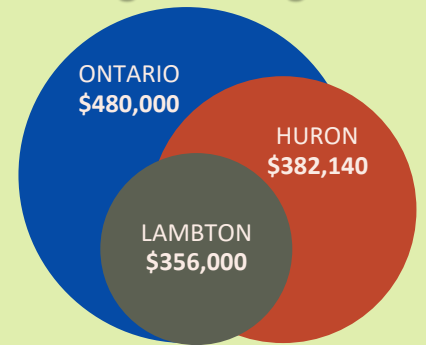
26% RARELY

9% NEVER

Connected Rural Communities Collaborative Survey, Grand Bend, 2019

A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. The sense of belonging to a greater community improves motivation, health, and happiness. Many people in our region have a strong sense of belonging, but there are others who feel left out. Housing is relatively inexpensive in our region (with the exception of Grand Bend itself) and fewer people spend more than 30% of their income on housing than in Ontario as a whole.

Average Housing Prices



Unemployment is lower than the Ontario average (based on the 2015 census). Although poverty is sometimes hard to spot in rural areas, it does exist.

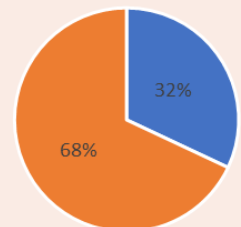
More than 1200 people in South Huron and 1300 people in Lambton Shores live in low income (defined by Statistics Canada as the income below which a family is likely to spend 20 percentage points more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family).

In Huron and Perth Counties, the living wage is estimated at \$17.44 per hour compared to the current minimum wage of \$14. **An estimated 50% of residents make less than the living wage.**

In 2017, the monthly cost of healthy food for a family of four in Lambton County was \$894, a 21% increase since 2009. **Eight percent of Lambton residents were estimated to be food insecure.**

In 2015, more than 16,000 people in Huron County were served by local food banks, including nearly 5000 children. **Twenty percent of people in Huron and Lambton countries are spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.**

Have you had difficulty making ends meet in the past year?



■ Yes ■ No ■

Connected Rural Communities Collaborative Grand Bend, 2019

“Transportation is an issue we see all the time. Parents may be without a car, work shifts, or have younger children to care for. Food insecurity is an issue for our families too. The food banks are doing what they can, but the hours are very limited. Families also need an easier way to find out what services are available to support them.”

Amy Wilhelm, Executive Director, Big Brothers Big Sisters South Huron



We are fortunate to live in a beautiful natural environment along the shores of Lake Huron, surrounded by forest, wood lots, and rich agricultural land. The Great Lakes are vital to the well-being of many people, containing almost 20% of world's surface freshwater, sustaining 4,000 species of plants and animals, and providing drinking water for one in four Canadians. Despite some threats, Lake Huron water remains a source of high-quality drinking water and is usually safe for swimming. It's our responsibility to ensure that these natural treasures are protected and conserved.

In 2018, the E. coli count in lake water at Port Blake was too high for swimming 29% of the time. The forest conditions and surface

water quality in Lower Parkhill Watershed (Parkhill to Grand Bend) were rated as Ds by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. And, the exterior forest conditions and surface water quality for Fish Creek (South Huron) were rated as Ds by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.