



## Community Change Survey 2011

### Background

Making Kenora Home was launched in September 2006. The organization is focused on poverty reduction through affordable and appropriate housing. The organizational vision includes community inclusion of marginalized citizens and HOME has become a change vehicle within Kenora. Other organizations have also formed around local community development issues within the same time frame.

- The *Common Land, Common Ground* initiative to develop cross-cultural collaboration and social learning between the First Nations and the municipal governments. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in November 2006 for the joint stewardship of Wassay Gaa Bo and the project has expanded into a respected research forum for collaborative governance and resource management.
- In 2008, the *Lake of the Woods Art Collective* formed to promote local artisans. This formalization raised a community voice for creative expression. A *Municipal Cultural Plan* is being developed to energize the enrichment of the community through arts.
- Although the *Harbourtown Centre Committee* has been in existence for a longer period than the other changes, it was formed by the community as a change project for the downtown core. It's profile raised in 2003 with the formation of Harbourtown Centre Biz (business improvement zone). The committee provides advice to city council on coordination of planning/economic development, tourism, downtown revitalization socio-economic issues of homelessness and vagrancy.

All of these change organizations require attitudinal changes within the community to achieve their goals. Over the previous five years these groups have often intersected in interesting collaborations. Making Kenora Home's affordable housing planning crossed into Harbourtown's efforts to deal with vagrancy. Common ground established an expectation that there would be a forum for reducing racial tensions through collaborative strategies. Cultural collaboration raised

local socio-economic issues through creative artistic expression. Artistic expression found a voice and venue through Making Kenora Home's stories and art shows featuring homelessness themes. With so many initiatives interweaving, social development seems to be solidifying and shifting attitudes. The 2011 community survey was developed to explore citizen understanding, involvement and contributions towards these change agencies and local socio-economic issues.

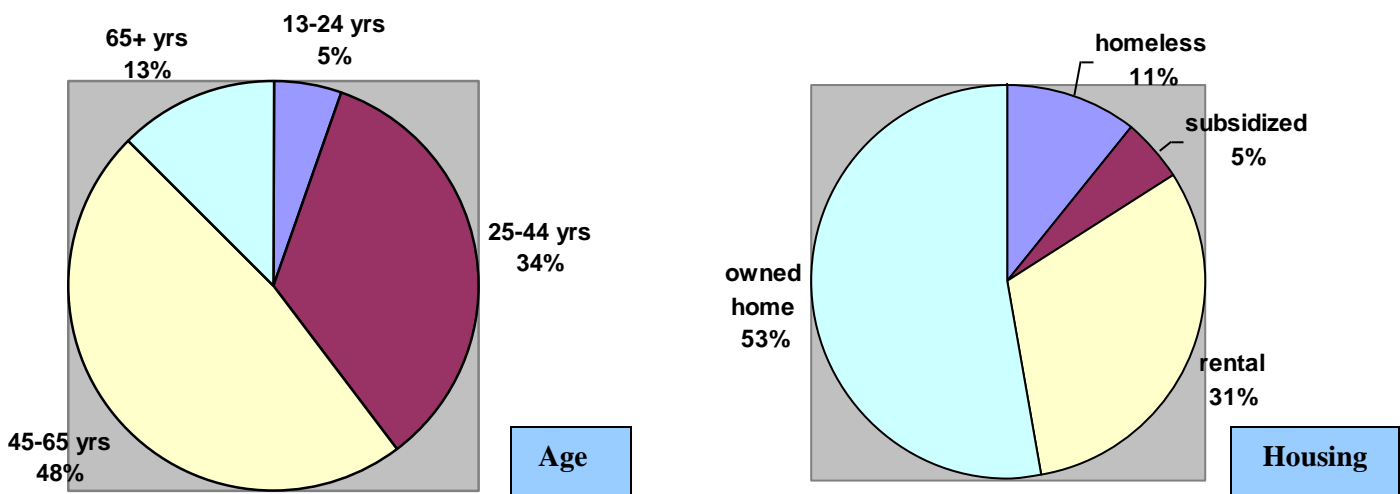
## Survey Structure and Process

The survey was structured to explore citizen perceptions towards four change organizations (Common Ground, Harbourtown, Municipal Cultural Plan/Lake of the Woods Arts Collective and Making Kenora Home) and local issues. The survey was also stratified to allow for attitudinal comparison through various demographic groups.

Community volunteers distributed one hundred questionnaires to a variety of citizen groups to ensure appropriate demographic distribution during June 2011. To reduce surveyor bias, half of the volunteers were not members of Making Kenora Home. Sampling was done at diverse venues (ie. offices, senior centres, emergency shelter, neighbourhoods, street locations). The data was then collated for presentation to community stakeholders.

## Survey Participants

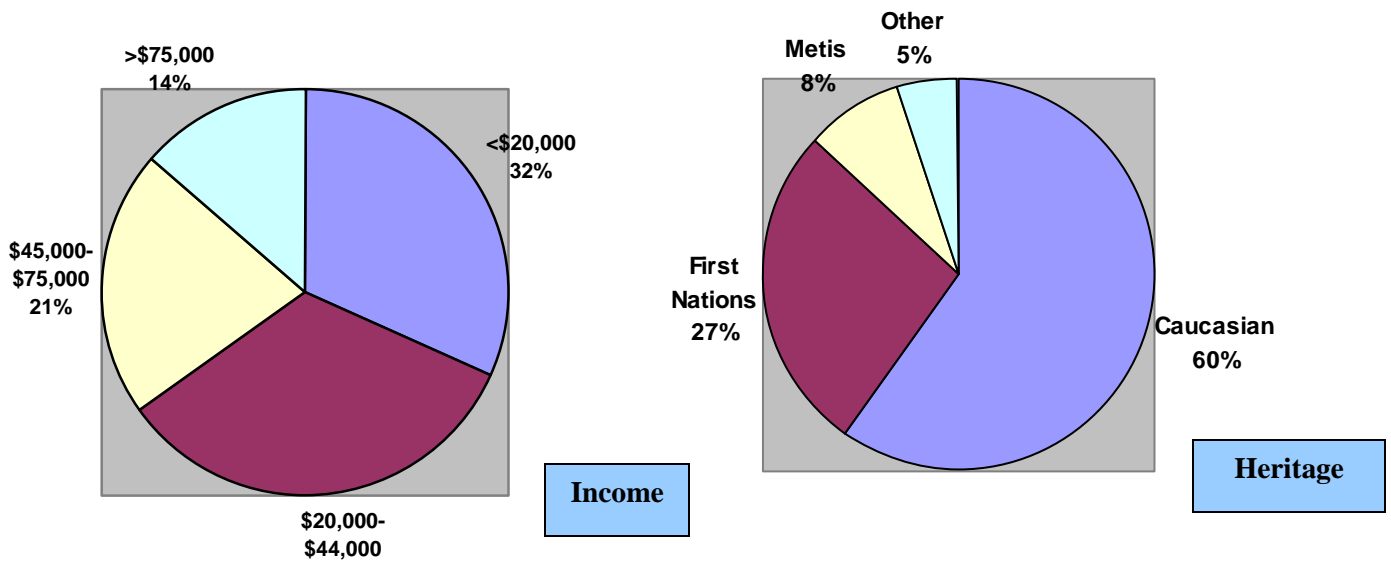
Participants were spread across the annual income spectrum<sup>1</sup> and reflects the previous census<sup>2</sup> report<sup>3</sup>. The bulk of participants were between the ages of 25 and 65. The majority identified themselves as Caucasian followed by First Nations. The self identification in the 2005 census was 83% Caucasian and 16% Aboriginal and it is expected that the 2011 census will report an increase in urban aboriginal population. Most owned their own homes but 10% were homeless. Again, these proportions are reflective of current census data for Kenora. Despite 32% reporting low income, only 5% had been able to secure subsidized housing. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the respondents lived with their children.



<sup>1</sup> 32% under \$20,000; 34% \$20,000-\$45,000; 48% \$46,000-\$75,000; 14% over \$75,000

<sup>2</sup> Canada Censuses 2005

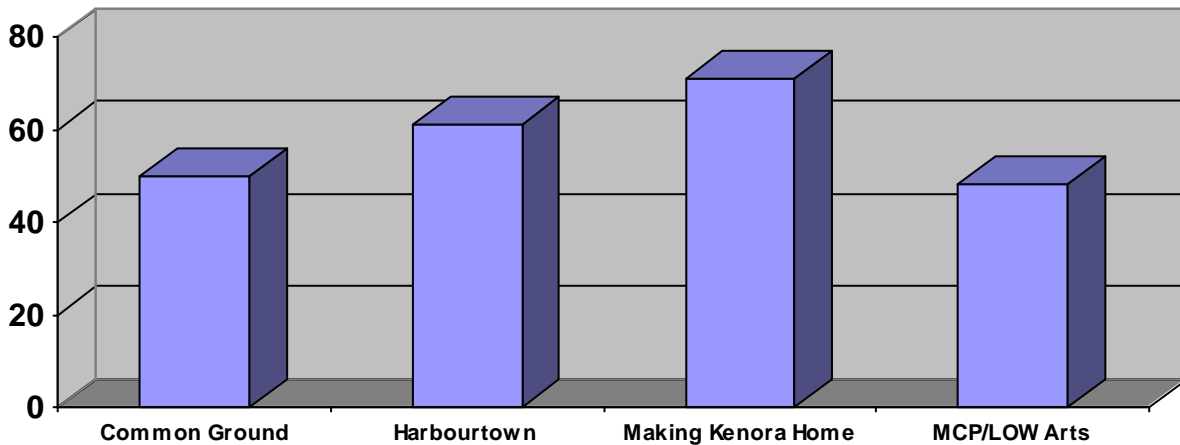
<sup>3</sup> \$59,946 median income locally and an 8.6% population living below poverty line



### Community Change Project Ratings

The participants had the highest awareness ratings for Making Kenora Home (71%) overall. All other groups were closely scored (Common Ground 50%, Harbourtown 61%, Municipal Cultural Plan/LOW Arts Collective 48%) which reflects well on the effectiveness of their communication strategies.

**Community Change Project Awareness**



Within the income groupings, awareness of all projects peaked for participants recording incomes within the \$45,000-\$75,000 category. For community importance, Making Kenora Home was ranked by 50% of the respondents as the most important change project followed by Common Ground (23%).

<b>PROJECT AWARENESS</b>	<b>Under 20 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>20 – 45 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>45 – 75 k (n = 20)</b>	<b>75 + k (n =13)</b>	<b>Homeless (n =10)</b>	<b>First Nations (n = 27)</b>	<b>All (n-100)</b>
<b>Common Ground</b>	19%	50%	76%	85%	20%	30%	50%
<b>Harbourtown Committee</b>	34%	72%	75%	77%	40%	44%	61%
<b>Making Kenora Home</b>	44%	81%	90%	85%	60%	59%	71%
<b>Municipal Cultural Plan/ Lake of the Woods Arts Collective</b>	25%	44%	85%	77%	30%	22%	48%
<b>None of the Above</b>	34%	34%	5%	15%	40%	37%	15%

*Awareness of community development projects compared to annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity expressed as percentages of awareness*

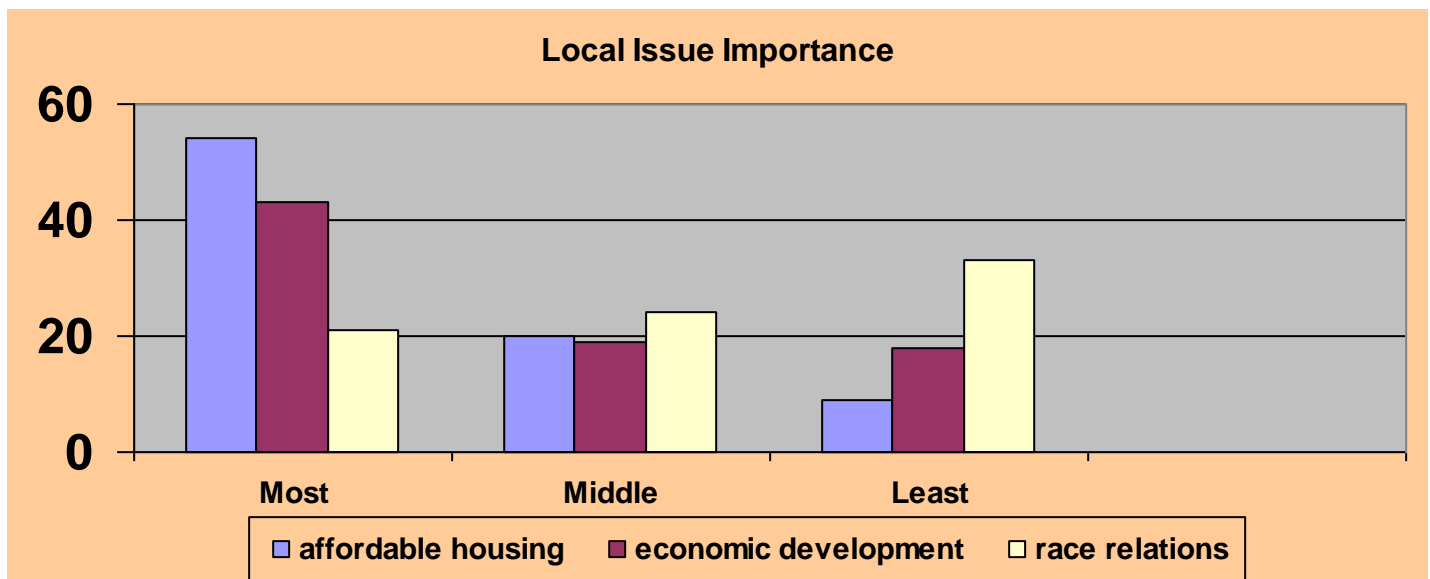
Making Kenora Home was rated highest by those whose income was above \$75,000. This runs counter to the expectation that those who are least impacted by homelessness would not value an affordable housing project above others. Of the three projects, aboriginal and homeless participants also rated Making Kenora Home as most important community change project.

<b>PROJECT IMPORTANCE</b>	<b>Under 20 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>20 – 45 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>45 – 75 k (n = 20)</b>	<b>75 + k (n =13)</b>	<b>Homeless (n =10)</b>	<b>First Nations (n = 27)</b>	<b>All (n-100)</b>
<b>Common Ground</b>	13%	38%	35%	0%	0%	19%	23%
<b>Harbourtown Committee</b>	13%	22%	15%	23%	0%	7%	18%
<b>Making Kenora Home</b>	38%	56%	55%	69%	50%	37%	50%

*Importance of community development projects compared to annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity expressed as percentages of most important ranking amongst comparators*

## Local Issues

The perception of Making Kenora Home as the highest ranked change project is directly related to the overall citizen ranking of the lack of affordable housing, need for economic development and race relations issues. Again the lack of affordable housing was rated as most important followed by the need for economic development and race relations. Increased awareness (78%) and interest (65%) in affordable housing was directly attributed to Making Kenora Home. This is confirmation that the advocacy group is impacting on local attitudes with regards to affordable housing. Further, related educational activities have increased citizen understanding of the issues either greatly (54%) or somewhat (33%) within the previous five years.



The lack of affordable housing was ranked highest by the participants whose income lay between \$20,000 and \$75,000. Middle income wage earners are pressed by the tight housing market (rental and sale) and the escalating difficulty in obtaining a mortgage. As the cost of living has risen, so has housing affordability. Low-income individuals are split between their need for any job and the need for affordable housing. Many believe that once better employment is secured, their housing needs will be met. The reality is in the experience of middle income earners--wages often do not cover adequate housing and affordability remains an issue.

ISSUE IMPORTANCE	Under 20 k (n = 32)	20 – 45 k (n = 32)	45 – 75 k (n = 20)	75 + k (n = 13)	Homeless (n = 10)	First Nations (n = 27)	All (n=100)
Lack of affordable housing	44%	63%	60%	54%	40%	41%	54%
Need for economic development/jobs	41%	38%	45%	62%	40%	30%	43%
Race relations	9%	34%	20%	15%	10%	26%	21%

*Importance of local social-economic issues compared to annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity expressed as percentages of ranked importance*

Written commentary by those who identified as homeless underscored their concern for economic development. The youngest homeless participant noted that poverty was worse now than five years ago in his view. A middle-aged gentleman commented that odd jobs don't pay enough to survive on anymore as they did previously. The senior respondent declared firmly that young people didn't want to work has he had when he was younger. All views made sense from their age perspective. The senior hadn't been in the work force for several years and believed that at least seasonal work was still available. The middle-aged gentleman knew that the unskilled labour market had declined. The young man had never cracked into the employment market and viewed larger social trends as the cause.

The interrelatedness of the issues was well explained in this comment by a middle-income, middle-aged Metis woman-“Although affordable housing is an issue, so is the area of creating jobs for those (and expectations to take jobs) who receive benefits so we can change the level of need and reliance of the social welfare system”. A First Nations male who had rated affordable housing as Kenora’s greatest need expanded on this –“Most likely street people should have a home (with) low-income housing (but) first get treatment”.

As a community, we have gained understanding within the previous five years and we increased interest in the local issues queried. The leading learning areas overall are affordable housing (72%), street people (70%) and poverty reduction (68%)--causes championed by Making Kenora Home.

The greatest gains across all issues have been in the middle income categories where understanding of affordable housing (90%;95%), street people (91%;90%) and poverty issues (88%;90%) have led to the highest reported levels of increased interest.

<b>ISSUE UNDERSTANDING</b>	<b>Under 20 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>20 – 45 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>45 – 75 k (n = 20)</b>	<b>75 + k (n =13)</b>	<b>Homeless (n =10)</b>	<b>First Nations (n = 27)</b>	<b>All (n-100)</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>							
<i>No change</i>	16%	6%	0%	15%	30%	26%	10%
<i>Some increase</i>	19%	31%	35%	31%	20%	15%	28%
<i>Great increase</i>	22%	59%	60%	46%	10%	22%	44%
<b>Poverty Reduction</b>							
<i>No change</i>	16%	9%	10%	15%	20%	22%	12%
<i>Some increase</i>	22%	41%	40%	46%	20%	19%	35%
<i>Great increase</i>	16%	47%	50%	31%	20%	19%	33%
<b>Health Care</b>							
<i>No change</i>	16%	9%	10%	13%	20%	22%	12%
<i>Some increase</i>	13%	50%	40%	31%	0%	19%	32%
<i>Great increase</i>	19%	34%	45%	46%	20%	11%	33%
<b>Racism</b>							
<i>No change</i>	16%	9%	10%	23%	20%	19%	13%
<i>Some increase</i>	25%	44%	50%	54%	30%	26%	39%
<i>Great increase</i>	16%	38%	40%	13%	10%	11%	26%
<b>“Street People”</b>							
<i>No change</i>	13%	6%	10%	13%	20%	15%	10%
<i>Some increase</i>	22%	41%	35%	46%	20%	26%	34%
<i>Great increase</i>	19%	50%	55%	31%	20%	19%	36%

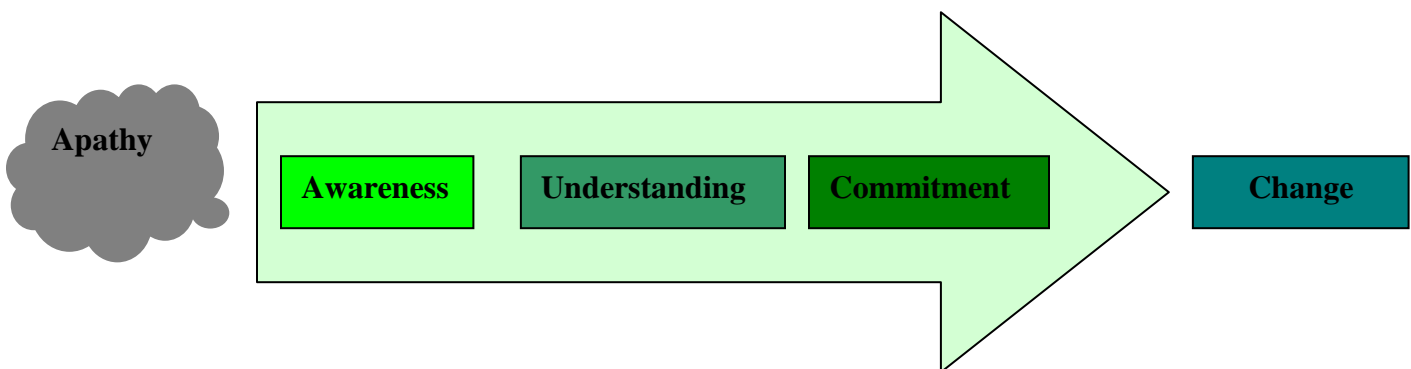
*Change in issue understanding within the previous five years in community issues compared to annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity expressed as percentages of awareness and interest support as indexed by no change, some increase and great increase expressed in percentages.*

ISSUE INTEREST	Under 20 k (n = 32)	20 – 45 k (n = 32)	45 – 75 k (n = 20)	75 + k (n =13)	Homeless (n =10)	First Nations (n = 27)	All (n-100)
<b><u>Interest</u></b>							
<b>Affordable housing</b>							
No change	13%	19%	20%	23%	10%	26%	18%
Some increase	13%	34%	50%	38%	10%	15%	30%
Great increase	16%	41%	25%	31%	10%	19%	27%
<b>Poverty Reduction</b>							
No change							
Some increase	13%	34%	15%	31%	10%	26%	23%
Great increase	19%	31%	70%	22%	10%	7%	36%
	6%	25%	15%	8%	10%	11%	14%
<b>Health Care</b>							
No change							
Some increase	9%	31%	15%	8%	10%	26%	17%
Great increase	16%	34%	35%	38%	0%	4%	28%
	6%	22%	45%	46%	10%	11%	24%
<b>Racism</b>							
No change							
Some increase	19%	28%	35%	23%	10%	26%	26%
Great increase	6%	28%	40%	54%	0%	4%	25%
	6%	19%	20%	15%	10%	11%	14%
<b>“Street People”</b>							
No change							
Some increase	13%	25%	20%	23%	10%	19%	20%
Great increase	16%	19%	60%	54%	10%	19%	29%
	9%	38%	10%	15%	10%	15%	20%

Change in issue interest within the previous five years in community issues compared to annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity expressed as percentages of awareness and interest support as indexed by no change, some increase and great increase expressed in percentages.

## Project Impacts

The community change model moves citizens from apathy to awareness to understanding to commitment.



Project support reveals the impact of change in real terms. Although Making Kenora Home was again ranked highest in volunteerism (16%) and donation (24%), the art development projects (Municipal Cultural Plan/LOW Arts Collective) had higher membership (18%). The lower support towards Common Ground and Harbourtown is more reflective of the structure and nature of the projects. Neither project requires substantial numbers of volunteers or donations and do not



recruit actively. Harbourtown Centre projects are well supported in public attendance as are the arts projects.

<b>Project Support</b>	<b>Under 20 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>20 – 45 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>45 – 75 k (n = 20)</b>	<b>75 + k (n =13)</b>	<b>Homeless (n =10)</b>	<b>First Nations (n = 27)</b>	<b>All (n-100)</b>
<b>Common Ground</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<i>member</i>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<i>volunteer</i>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<i>donor</i>							
<b>Harbourtown Committee</b>							
<i>member</i>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<i>volunteer</i>	<b>0%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<i>donor</i>	<b>0%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Making Kenora Home</b>							
<i>member</i>	<b>6%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<i>volunteer</i>	<b>3%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<i>donor</i>	<b>3%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Municipal Cultural Plan/ LOW Collective</b>							
<i>member</i>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<i>volunteer</i>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<i>donor</i>	<b>16%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>None of the Above</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>27%</b>

*Support for identified community development projects compared to annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity expressed as percentages of support as indexed by membership, volunteerism and donation percentages*

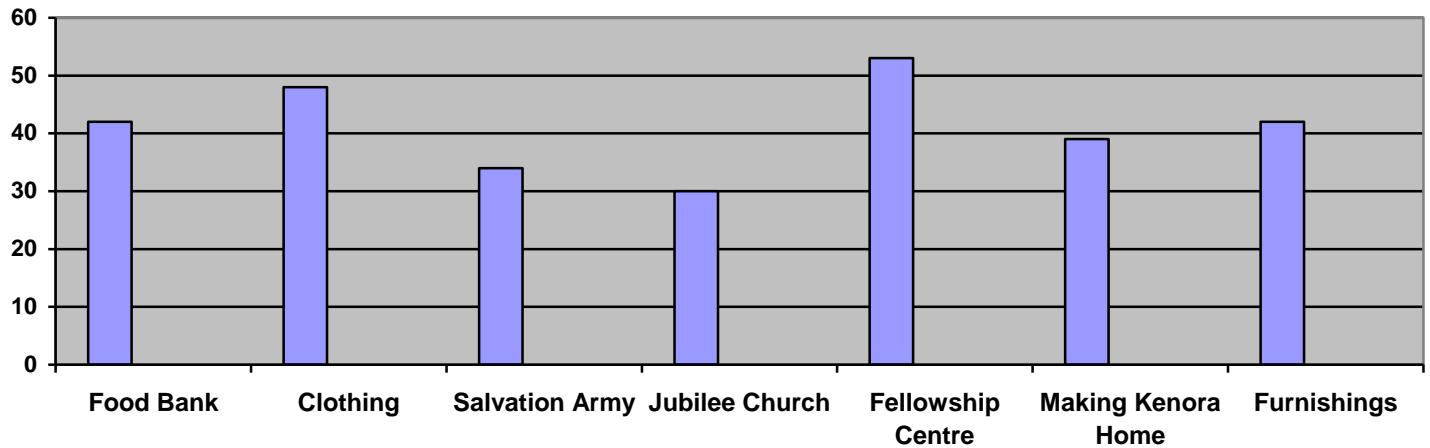
The support for the arts by the homeless was interesting but not surprising to those who are familiar with the population. The emergency shelter is festooned with art. Pieces are often donated by patrons as a thank you or as fundraiser for the centre. The street artists collective began after a showing during a Week of Action art display by homeless individuals in 2008 and they have also formally supported the Fellowship Centre with a proceed from their sales.

Donations to various causes have increased within the previous five years in all categories. The amounts donated have not been quantified since the survey was intended to measure change in behaviours amongst Kenora residents.

Donations sometimes changed because of factors beyond the participant’s control. A senior noted that her “clothing (donations had) decreased because Salvation Army won’t accept clothes. Household items (donations had) decreased because Helping Hands stopped accepting items and no one else does, except the Salvation Army who does not do pick ups”



### Reported Donation Increases



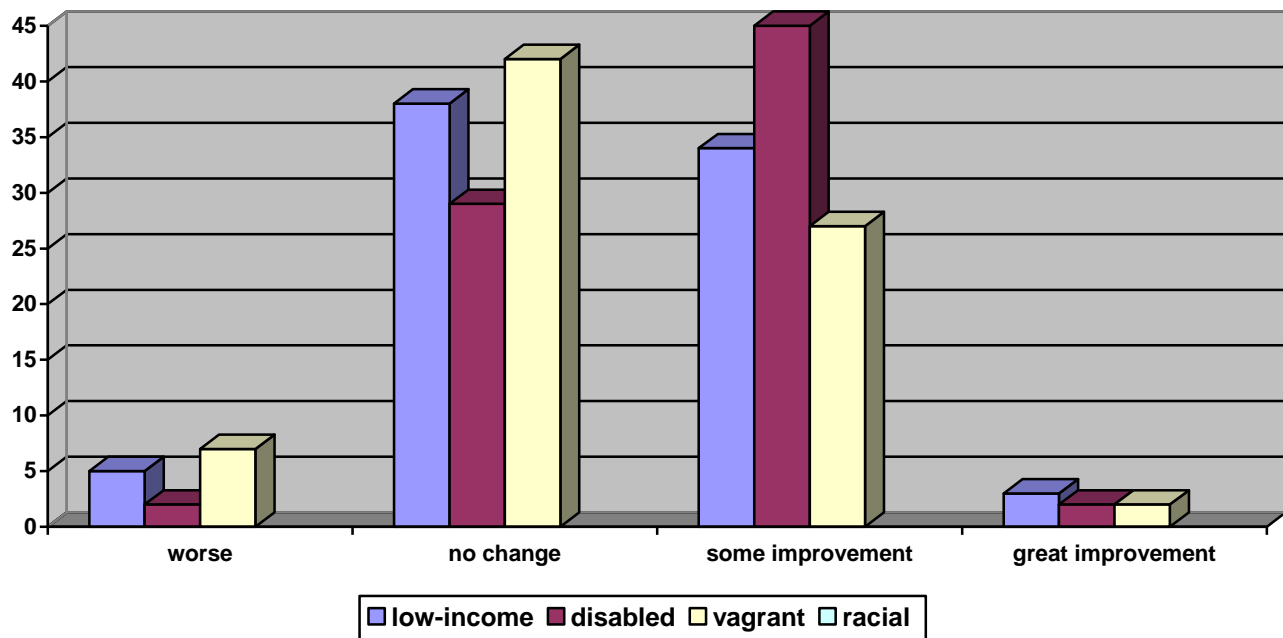
INCREASED DONATIONS	Under 20 k (n = 32)	20 – 45 k (n = 32)	45 – 75 k (n = 20)	75 + k (n =13)	Homeless (n =10)	First Nations (n = 27)	All (n-100)
<b>Local Food Bank</b>							
No change	28%	41%	35%	38%	50%	37%	36%
Some increase	19%	47%	50%	31%	10%	19%	34%
Great increase	6%	6%	5%	15%	0%	4%	7%
<b>Clothing Donation</b>							
No change							
Some increase	19%	38%	25%	54%	30%	30%	30%
Great increase	25%	47%	45%	31%	20%	26%	35%
	3%	13%	25%	3%	0%	4%	13%
<b>Furnishings Donation</b>							
No change							
Some increase	34%	59%	50%	54%	50%	33%	49%
Great increase	9%	22%	45%	23%	0%	13%	21%
	3%	9%	0%	8%	0%	4%	5%
<b>Salvation Army</b>							
No change	13%	59%	45%	46%	20%	37%	40%
Some increase	25%	25%	35%	38%	20%	11%	27%
Great increase	3%	6%	10%	8%	0%	6%	7%
<b>Jubilee Church</b>							
No change	9%	53%	55%	62%	0%	22%	41%
Some increase	19%	25%	45%	15%	30%	19%	19%
Great increase	13%	9%	15%	8%	30%	11%	11%
<b>Fellowship Centre</b>							
No change	9%	28%	55%	54%	0%	7%	26%
Some increase	19%	50%	20%	23%	0%	22%	33%
Great increase	22%	16%	15%	15%	6%	30%	20%
<b>Making Kenora Home</b>							
No change	13%	34%	55%	46%	20%	19%	35%
Some increase	22%	31%	20%	38%	20%	19%	25%
Great increase	6%	22%	15%	8%	0%	11%	14%

Support for identified community development projects compared to annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity expressed as percentages of increased donation support as indexed by no change, some increase great increases

## Community Attitudinal Change

Some improvement in community inclusiveness within the previous five years has been noted overall. Those who are disabled are perceived to have had the best increase in attitudinal change (45%), followed by citizens with low-incomes (34%), citizens facing racial discrimination (27%) and those who are vagrant (20%). A perception of improvement is gratifying for all projects who are working to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

**Attitudinal Change Towards Marginalized Citizens**



Amongst the surveyed homeless, only 10% acknowledged improvement. This response is spoken to in the data qualifiers. Commentary on community inclusion spoke to the need for more improvement to the welfare of the street people. One said that “it is so sad to see people eating out of garbage cans. This town is more for the tourist than our own people” The tourist versus citizen focus was elaborated upon in the following, “I think that many people in Kenora feel that our vagrant population has a negative effect on our economy. Getting people off the street is something that our community needs to take seriously” A senior urged for “more effort between First Nations and community to have “street” people be engaged in activities that are suitable for them. The most visible are First Nations although they are NOT the only ones on the street” Of the aboriginal respondents 18% noted improvement towards vagrants. Only 11% acknowledged improvement in local race relations. Of those who are low-income, 44% reported that they are better perceived than they were five years ago. This group also reports the highest improvement for street people (28%) although other income brackets are closely clustered at 19%, 25% and 23% improvements.

<b>COMMUNITY ATTITUDE CHANGE</b>	<b>Under 20 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>20 – 45 k (n = 32)</b>	<b>45 – 75 k (n = 20)</b>	<b>75 + k (n =13)</b>	<b>Homeless (n =10)</b>	<b>First Nations (n = 27)</b>	<b>All (n-100)</b>
<b>Low-income</b>							
Worse	3%	13%	0%	0%	30%	11%	5%
No change	50%	22%	50%	46%	20%	22%	38%
Some improvement	44%	16%	45%	46%	10%	22%	34%
Great improvement	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%
<b>Disabled</b>							
Worse	0%	6%	0%	0%	10%	4%	2%
No change	31%	25%	30%	38%	40%	33%	29%
Some improvement	63%	22%	60%	54%	10%	15%	45%
Great improvement	0%	3%	10%	0%	0%	0%	2%
<b>Vagrant</b>							
Worse	9%	6%	5%	15%	20%	4%	8%
No change	53%	31%	60%	54%	30%	37%	45%
Some improvement	28%	13%	25%	15%	0%	11%	20%
Great improvement	0%	6%	0%	8%	10%	7%	3%
<b>Racial Relations</b>							
Worse	6%	9%	5%	8%	10%	0%	7%
No change	50%	34%	50%	38%	40%	48%	42%
Some improvement	38%	9%	35%	46%	10%	7%	27%
Great improvement	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%

*Perceived changes in community attitudes within the previous five years towards marginalized citizens (low-income, disabled, vagrant, racially disempowered) sorted by annual income (CAD), homelessness and ethnicity and expressed as percentages of ratings(worse, no change, some improvement, great improvement)*

## Data Qualifiers

Because the change questions did not encompass those who were already knowledgeable or charitable, the data does not reveal how many citizens already had an understanding or committed to the organizations listed.

Some questions were not answered by all participants (i.e. 3 did not provide demographic data) but the statistical impact was minimal given the sample size.

Others did not follow directions and rated multiple projects at one level. Given that each answer was weighted as one, this didn't impact significantly and corroborated the position of Making Kenora Home-a community is multifaceted and all change projects provide a window to bring light into Kenora from a different angle. No one group or approach is more important than another, therefore rating exercises can be problematic for participants. Once basic needs are met (food & shelter), comparing community change projects can be like comparing apples and oranges-it becomes preference rather than benefit. In addition, the more we understand about issues, the more inter-related they become. Affordable housing without economic growth fosters tenements mired in hopelessness. Economic growth without inclusion of all disadvantaged minorities becomes divisive. Divisiveness becomes social discontent.

In addition, it was sometimes clear to the interviewer that the participant misunderstood the question but the interviewers were instructed to only accept the answers provided during the survey itself. Although some of the homeless said that they were not aware of Making Kenora Home, they indicated awareness of some of the projects and personnel (i.e. street picnics, the annual homeless stories release, Christmas sharing circle) in post survey conversations. Their answers remained as recorded in the survey to preserve the survey integrity.

Another surveying issue that emerged was the minimization of community attitudinal improvement. When street people rated changes in community attitude towards themselves, several minimized change in the survey itself despite having spoken of positively of changes during conversation. When this anomaly was brought to an elder who was a trusted intermediary with these persons, an explanation was provided. Attention towards marginalized people is often fleeting and stimulated by seasonal events such as Christmas and Thanksgiving. To acknowledge change could result in a withdrawal of support before the completion of real and lasting change. It is not in their own best interest to acknowledge progress prematurely. This is true for any group who benefits directly from a change project during its developmental stage. Although the project beneficiaries are best positioned to provide impact feedback, their own self interest can skew responses.

## **Summary**

The community survey was undertaken to evaluate whether the identified community change projects had impacted upon Kenora. Awareness for all projects, Harbourtown Centre, Common Ground, Making Kenora Home and the combined category, Municipal Cultural Plan/ Lake of the Woods Arts Collective, was excellent. The findings provide strong confirmation of a change in attitude towards the identified marginalized populations. Perceptions of local issues were ranked across demographic categories, with the data confirming that affordable housing is not only a common concern among those surveyed notwithstanding age or income level but is actually the preeminent concern canvassed. In specific regard to Making Kenora Home, the apparent increase in awareness and understanding of affordable housing issues is believed to be owing to the effectiveness of the organization's advocacy activities.

*MAKING KENORA HOME wishes to thank all of the volunteers and participants who assisted us with our Community Change Survey. Without their willingness to give freely of their time, this project would not have been possible. It is this volunteerism that speaks directly to the real heart of Kenora.*