



GRAND ROUNDS

A Renfrew County picture has been painted to set the stage for the development of healthier communities that support “healthy spaces, health equity, a higher quality of life for every resident and a vibrant destination for visitors.”

The Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport, through its Healthy Communities Partnership Stream, provides funding for a multi-sector community collaborative. The Healthy Communities Partnership Renfrew County has established recommendations to improve the health, well-being and quality of life in our communities by addressing six key health priorities: physical activity, sport and recreation, injury prevention, healthy eating, mental health promotion, tobacco use and exposure, and substance and alcohol misuse.

The collaborative looked at the make-up of all communities within our county to help define assets, find the gaps and identify the challenges to build healthy community.

Some parts of this picture are rosier than others. For example, physical activity and sport participation is higher than the provincial aver-

age, and many organizations, programs and facilities are in place throughout the county.

However, the majority of people in Renfrew County do not meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. The large geographic area of the county, transportation barriers and the high percentages of residents living with lower incomes are some of the factors that prevent people from accessing activities.

In other priority areas—such as healthy eating, with only one-third of people eating enough fruits and vegetables each day, a daily smoking rate that is 9% higher, and more heavy drinkers than provincially—there is also a need for significant change.

The collaborative hopes to address the underlying issues by establishing policies and recommending actions to encourage physical activity and positive social interaction, as well as access to healthy food, social supports, good living conditions and employment.

“The social determinants of health are an important basis for understanding why Renfrew County faces significant popula-

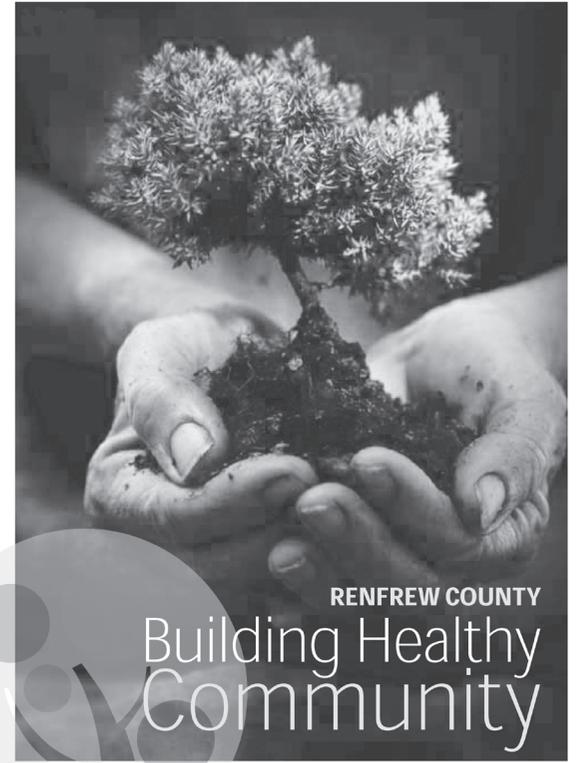
tion health challenges,” says Shawna Babcock, Executive Director of KidActive, Delivery Agency, Healthy Communities Partnership Stream.

An important aspect of the Renfrew County vision for improved health and well-being is coordination of community health initiatives with the health care system which could potentially prevent illness, decrease injury and increase overall quality of health care while improving efficiency and reducing costs.

“Aligning community health initiatives with the strengths of our health care system is an innovative approach to improving our population’s health, well-being and quality of life in communities throughout the region,” says Babcock.

The Healthy Communities Partnership Renfrew County and Renfrew Victoria Hospital are partnering to collaborate on projects that are innovative and dedicated to community engagement and health promotion.

Randy Penney, RVH President and CEO, comments, “We’re pleased to be involved in this visionary project that furthers the commitment to improve the health status of our population by looking at all the determinants of health.”



You can download the full Renfrew County Community Picture Report at <http://physicalactivitynetwork.wordpress.com>