

March 2011



building wellbeing and prosperity together

TAKING ACTION ON POVERTY

a conference • Truro • Nova Scotia October 26 to 28 • 2010

POST-CONFERENCE REPORT

Prepared by:

Health Promotion Clearinghouse



CONFERENCE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

An overview of the agenda for the 2.5-day conference is provided below. The full conference program is included as Appendix A.

Tuesday, October 26 (Open to the Public)

- Opening Ceremonies
- First Voice Panel, interviewed by Rita Shelton Deverell: *"Living in Poverty in Nova Scotia"*
- The Hon. Art Eggleton – *"We Can't Afford Poverty Anymore"*
- Reception

Wednesday, October 27

Morning

- Greetings and Opening Remarks
- The Hon. Ed Broadbent – *"Out With The New Barbarism: Combating Poverty And Inequality"*
- Dr. Christine Saulnier (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-NS) – *"The Cost of Poverty in Nova Scotia"* – followed by a panel discussion from the perspectives of groups particularly vulnerable to poverty
- Table Discussions

Afternoon

- Local Success Stories and Challenges: Eight presentations and discussions
- Lessons Learned from Different Jurisdictions: Panel discussion from the perspectives of non-governmental, business, and government

Evening (Open to the Public)

- Liz Weaver, Vibrant Communities *"Communities Can Reduce Poverty – Five Stories Prove It's True: Creating Vibrant Communities"*
- Screening of films *"Poor No More"* and *"Four Feet Up"*

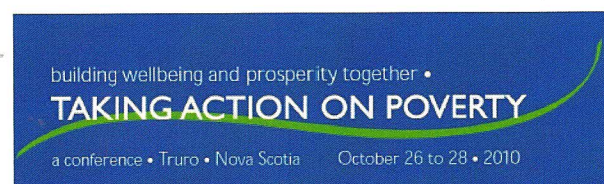
Thursday, October 28

Morning

- Liz Weaver, Vibrant Communities Presentation and Workshop on Collaboration *"Faster Alone, Farther Together"*
- "Next Steps" Sessions – Facilitated regional discussions on next steps for taking action on poverty in Nova Scotia

Afternoon

- Motivational Speaker – Robert Wright
- Flip Chart Gallery Walkabout
- Closing plenary



Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Centre
437 Prince Street
Truro, Nova Scotia

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| Tuesday October 26 | 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm |
| Wednesday October 27 | 8:30 am to 8:30 pm |
| Thursday October 28 | 8:30 am to 3:30 pm |

our vision

Everyone brings his or her own experiences and knowledge to share. We are committed to learning from each other. It's a chance to learn, share and offer suggestions to reduce poverty for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.



INSPIRATION FROM ROBERT WRIGHT

Robert Wright delivered a powerful motivational presentation during the last day's lunchtime session. His task, as he described, was "to help to create a moment in which all you have seen and heard thus far can crystallize and be transformed into a searing, burning motivation." To get juices flowing, he began by reading excerpts from a James Baldwin essay—"Fifth Avenue, Uptown"—about Harlem which was first published in *Esquire Magazine* in 1960. The full text is available at www.esquire.com/features/fifth-avenue-uptown

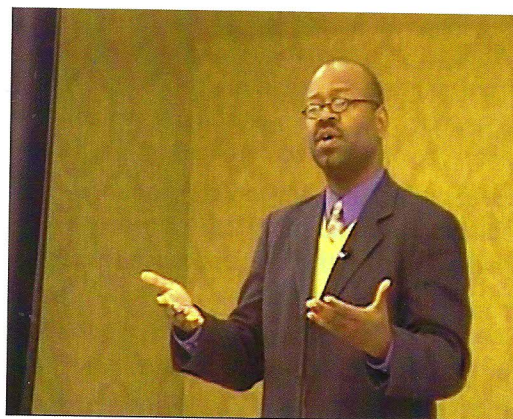
The key message in the essay, according to Mr. Wright, is that poverty is expensive, living in poverty is expensive, and allowing poverty to continue is expensive. He pointed to the famous quote on poverty from the Baldwin essay — *"Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor."* He continued with the next few lines of Baldwin's message, including *"And if one is a member of a captive population, economically speaking, one's feet have simply been placed on the treadmill forever. One is victimized economically in a thousand ways."*

Mr. Wright suggested that a good start for programmatic answers to poverty was to implement the recommendations of the Senate Committee's report *"In from the Margins."* He pointed particularly to three recommendations that hold the spirit of ideas fundamental to the eradication of poverty—focusing on the eradication and not reduction of poverty; making sure people have liveable incomes; and recognizing that poverty is a violation of human rights.

Referring again to Baldwin's essay, Mr. Wright stated that the presence in society of poverty represents a social and moral bankruptcy. The social and economic revolution needed to eradicate poverty is absolutely essential for establishing a sustainable nation. Society today is not sustainable for anyone and requires a radical (i.e. fundamental) solution. He asked "Where does the political will for this solution come from?" "It comes from you", he

said, "the people in this room. Those who seek elected office without being willing to speak about poverty and its solutions, who don't understand the complexity and structural nature of poverty, should not be elected to the office they seek."

In closing, Mr. Wright challenged participants to be willing to support what comes from the changes that will be necessary. He hoped that upon leaving the conference, participants would be "different people, doing different things and hoping for a different reality."



"Poverty is personal, poverty is structural and poverty is political. We have many of the programmatic answers to poverty... If you wanted to get a really good start on changing the nature of poverty in Canada, you couldn't go to a better place—certainly not a more convenient place—than a Senate Standing Committee report."

"How do we take children out of poverty while leaving their parents in it?"

"We need to recognize the intersections of poverty, poverty and gender, poverty and race, poverty and First Nations."

– Robert Wright