

Vital Conversations

understanding the signs of our times

Host Kit



**Community
Foundation**
of Greater Peterborough

Contents

A message from the Community Foundation	2
About Vital Signs and Vital Conversations	3
About the Community Foundation	3
Hosting your Conversation	4
Some Important Information	4
Planning Your Conversation	5
On The Day Of Your Conversation	5
Inviting your Guests	6
Tips For Hosting A Great Conversation	7
Sharing your Conversation	8

This initiative is a collaboration between the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough and the Atkinson Foundation.



A message from the Community Foundation

Thank you for signing on to be a Vital Conversations host. Our community is built by people like you who care about Peterborough. By hosting your own conversation, you are taking on an important leadership role in our community.

We have so much to celebrate in our community, and yes, we have work to do. We're not always going to agree on the best way forward. But if we can start with the one thing we have in common - our shared love for this community - then we can begin to find ways to work together, through our differences, for the good of community.

We hope that Vital Conversations is the start of more meaningful and productive approaches to debates and decision making in Peterborough. We know that it starts with all of us, with our connection to this place and our relationships to one another. We are the ones who set the tone in our public realm, who raise the bar for our elected leaders, who lead the way when change is needed and who celebrate together when things are good.

We also hope that this is the start of a relationship with you and your Community Foundation. We can't wait to hear how your conversation goes. The information in this kit will help get you plan your conversation from start to finish, but if you have any questions (or suggestions!) along the way, we'd love to hear from you. You can reach Nicole Gagliardi, our Program Coordinator at 705-740-2347 or nicole.gagliardi@cfgp.ca for more information, assistance or clarification.

Again, thank you for your community leadership, and we wish you the best with hosting your conversation!

Sincerely,



Diane Richard,
Chair,
Community Foundation
of Greater Peterborough



John Good,
Executive Director
Community Foundation of
Greater Peterborough

About Vital Conversations

The Community Foundation uses Vital Signs to understand Peterborough, recognize our community's strengths and identify where we need to make changes. The information in Vital Signs® paints a picture of where we are as a community, but it's up to us to figure out where we should go from here. As we continue to build our understanding of Peterborough, we must engage in the more challenging – but exciting – task of deciding who we want to be, and what we need to do, together, to get there.

For the month of October 2017, 100+ Vital Conversations will bring friends and neighbours together in the City and County of Peterborough to share a meal and a conversation about Greater Peterborough's Vital Signs. Anyone can be a Vital Conversations host. You invite the guests and plan the meal, and the Community Foundation will provide everything you need to get your conversation going.

The Vital Conversations Card Game is a tool that you and your guests can use to have an interesting discussion where you share your perspectives, ask hard questions and make suggestions for building a stronger community. Every conversation will identify actions we can take today to build a better future for Peterborough.

Feedback from your conversation will be used to direct the Community Foundation's 2018 grants to local charities and will be shared with community members and local leaders in the City and County of Peterborough.

About the Community Foundation

The Community Foundation brings community builders together to create meaningful and lasting change in the City and County of Peterborough. Since 2011, the Foundation has invested more than \$1.2 million in grants to the local charities that build community vitality in Peterborough. Learn more on our [website](http://www.cfgp.ca) (www.cfgp.ca).

Hosting your Conversation

Some Important Information:

- 1. Funding:** If you want to be a Vital Conversations host, but are worried that you can't afford to do it, you can apply for up to \$100 to help cover the costs of things like food, transportation and rental fees for space in a community centre. [Apply online](http://www.cfgp.ca/vs/funding) (www.cfgp.ca/vs/funding) or by phone.
- 2. Accessible Documents:** There are text-only versions of the [2016 Vital Signs](http://www.cfgp.ca/vitalsigns2016-text-only.pdf) (www.cfgp.ca/vitalsigns2016-text-only.pdf) and [2015 Vital Signs](http://www.cfgp.ca/vitalsigns2015-text-only.pdf) (www.cfgp.ca/vitalsigns2015-text-only.pdf) reports available online or in print.
 - **Accessibility Needs:** If you or any of your guests have any accessibility requirements please contact the Community Foundation and we will do our best to accommodate your needs. Not sure what your guests' needs are? Just ask when you invite them.
- 3. Vital Conversations Card Game:** Every conversation will use the Vital Conversations Card Game to help guide the group discussion. You can print out the [deck of cards](http://www.cfgp.ca/vs/card-game) (www.cfgp.ca/vs/card-game) at home using or pick up a deck at your local public library. You can also request to have a deck mailed to you.
- 4. Greater Peterborough's Vital Signs:** You can read the Vital Signs reports or [watch the video online](http://www.cfgp.ca/reports) (www.cfgp.ca/reports). Hard copies of the reports are also available by mail.
- 5. Join our Facebook Group:** There is a group for Vital Conversations hosts on our [Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/communityfoundationptbo) (www.facebook.com/communityfoundationptbo) where you can connect to other community builders, share ideas, ask questions and see what's happening with other conversations.

Contact us:

Nicole Gagliardi, Program Coordinator
705-740-2347

nicole.gagliardi@cfgp.ca

www.cfgp.ca/vitalsigns

Planning Your Conversation

1. **Register online.** Fill out a short [registration form](http://www.cfgp.ca/vs/registration) (www.cfgp.ca/vs/registration) to let us know that you are planning to host a conversation and stay connected throughout October.
2. **Pick the date and time.** Decide when you want to host your conversation, any date in the month of October that works for you.
3. **Choose the location.** You can host in your home, a public space like a park, a restaurant or café or local community space.
4. **Invite your guests.** We recommend inviting 4 - 8 people with different perspectives, backgrounds and experiences.
5. **Plan the meal.** Food is one of those things that bring people together. Your conversation can take place over lunch at your kitchen table, it could be a potluck in the park, coffee at Tims or a pizza party...

On The Day Of Your Conversation

1. **Get ready.** Set up the Vital Conversations Card Game and take a minute to read the instructions. Have some copies of the Vital Signs report on hand, or pull up the video on your laptop or tablet to share with your guests.
2. **Welcome your guests.** Get everyone comfortable and get the meal started. If your guests don't know each other, you may want to spend some time on introductions.
3. **Check out Vital Signs.** You may want to look at the [Vital Signs report or video](http://www.cfgp.ca/reports) (www.cfgp.ca/reports) together before you get started with the conversation.
4. **Get talking.** As the host, you'll set up the game and get the conversation going. We recommend at least three rounds of the Vital Conversations Card Game.
5. **Share your conversation.** Send your [Vital Actions notes](http://www.cfgp.ca/vs/actions) (www.cfgp.ca/vs/actions) to the Community Foundation and share photos and highlights of your conversation on social media.

6

Inviting your Guests

We recommend inviting 4 to 8 people to your conversation. They may be your neighbours, your friends or family, the regulars at your favourite coffee shop, or maybe the folks you play hockey with. The Vital Conversations Card Game works best with a diverse group, so try to invite a mix of people of different ages, genders, backgrounds, life experiences and perspectives.

Emailing your Invitations: copy and paste this text into the body of your email, and personalize it to suit your own style.

Dear [Name],

This fall, I'm joining 100+ members of our community to host a conversation about Greater Peterborough's Vital Signs. I want to talk about the things that really matter in our community, and how we can work through our differences to build a stronger Peterborough.

I'd like to invite you to join me and a few others for a meal and conversation. It's a chance to connect with people who share your love for this place, even if they don't always share your perspective. Here are the details:

Date: [date]

Time: [time]

Location: [location]

Notes: [add any additional notes here, like instructions for a potluck or directions to the location]

Please RSVP to me by [insert date here] and let me know if you have any accessibility needs that I can help meet. I hope you'll be able to join me in participating in some #VitalConversations!

PS. You can learn more about Vital Signs and Vital Conversations online at www.cfpg.ca/vitalsigns.

Mailing your invitations: print out the last page of this document for invitations that you can personalize and drop in your neighbours' mailboxes.

Tips For Hosting A Great Conversation

Vital Conversations isn't about agreeing with each other, or convincing people to think or act in the same way; it's about talking together and listening to each other even when we don't agree, learning to disagree respectfully, and finding ways to work through our differences for the good of our community.

Opening your conversation: Help your guests get comfortable. It's worth taking some time to get to know one another before diving into the Vital Conversations Card Game. Asking your guests to share something about themselves or talk about an area of common interest is a good way to start things off on a positive note.

Set the tone: As the host, it's up to you to set the tone of your conversation. How you do this will depend on your own approach, but in general you want to help your guests feel comfortable sharing their perspectives, make sure participation is balanced (i.e. don't let one or two people dominate the conversation) and keep the conversation flowing and interesting to the group.

Closing the conversation: The way we leave a conversation can be as important as the conversation itself. The key to a good closing is offering your guests one last opportunity to connect with one another and to part on positive and hopeful terms.

More tips: Check out the links below for more information on how to lead a great conversation

1. [Facilitation Tip Sheet](#)

(www.cdc.gov/phcommunities/docs/plan_facilitation_tip_sheet.doc)

2. [Guide for Dialogue Facilitators](#)

(www.wellesley.edu/religiouslife/resources/east/publication/diversitykit/dialogue/facilitatorsguide)

3. [Embrace Controversy - Avoid Conflict](#)

(www.nps.gov/subjects/climatechange/upload/controversyorconflict.pdf)

8

Sharing your Conversation

If you use social media, we encourage you to share your experience as a Vital Conversations host with your networks using the hashtags #VitalPtbo and #VitalConversations. Here are a few suggestions for posts you can share:

- Complete this sentence: "I'm hosting a conversation because..."
- Complete this sentence: "I think it's important for people in Peterborough to talk about..."
- Share the recipe for the meal that you'll be having during your conversation, whether it's takeout from a favourite restaurant or a treasured family recipe.
- Take a series of photos during your conversation and create a gallery that you can share afterward with a few of the action items from your group.
- Take a picture of the 'Question Card' that is most interesting to you and ask your networks what they think.
- Share the Vital Signs statistic that you find most surprising or interesting.



To:

From:

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