

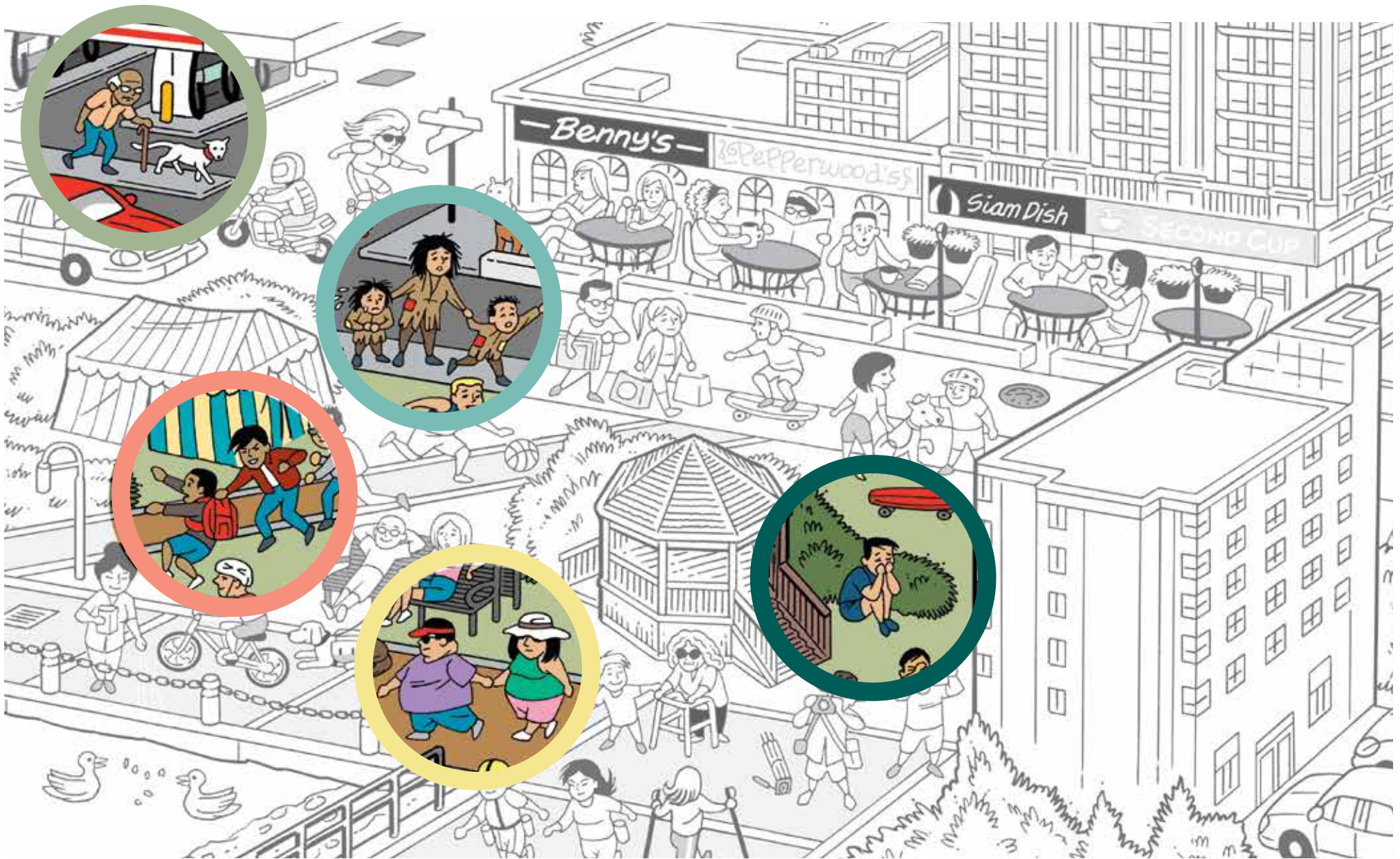
BURLINGTON

**VitalSigns® 2013**

As a prosperous community, issues are hard to see.







Burlingtonians have much to take pride in. Nestled on the shore of Lake Ontario and surrounded by magnificent conservation lands and green spaces, Burlington is not only one of the most beautiful places to live, it is also a safe and welcoming community of relative affluence. **But even as a prosperous community, critical issues and people in need are hard to see.**

# BURLINGTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S VITAL SIGNS® 2013

Mental health issues, especially among our youth; obesity, poverty and healthy levels of physical activity, are serious and growing issues that deeply affect our community. But because Burlington is a prosperous community, the issues are not always easy to see. Vital Signs® is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada, coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

Vital Signs continues to build on partnerships with a broad range of community members and organizations who have contributed to the development of this report. Burlington's 2nd edition of Vital Signs is an initiative of the Burlington Community Foundation.

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Research by SAGE Research Corporation

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

## Imagine what we could do together.

Welcome to the 2nd edition of Burlington's Vital Signs – the Burlington Community Foundation's annual check-up that evaluates Burlington as a place to live, work, and play by identifying trends that are critical to our quality of life.

This report advocates that connections are critical to community vitality. We are intrinsically connected to one another, and what we experience together – both positive and negative – are also interwoven.

By exploring 11 key areas of community life, this report celebrates all that we have to be proud of and shines a spotlight on the areas of greatest need in our community. It also shows that our experiences do not exist in isolation; they interweave and overlap and one issue often affects another.

One issue of tremendous importance for our community – and we know does not stand in isolation – is mental health problems or illness. Mental illness is indiscriminate. Regardless of affluence, when you take into account family members, friends and neighbours, almost everyone is affected by mental illness in some way.

My own personal memories of growing up with a father who suffered from severe depression and anxiety are tinged with great sadness. Growing up I had long stints of feeling a sense of isolation from many of the normal life experiences that my friends seemed to be having. I only wish that my dad, and my family, had the opportunity to receive the treatment and support that we needed, and must make available to everyone affected by mental illness. There is no place for blame or shame.

Vital Signs helps guide Burlington Community Foundation's granting program and helps us inform our donors and fundholders about issues facing our community. Many organizations and individuals gave of their time and expertise to make this report truly the work of many. Special thanks to Paletta International, our Vital Signs Proud Supporter, and thanks also to Sage Research Corporation and PLAY Advertising for their inspiring dedication to this initiative.

I invite you to take a moment and read our 2013 Vital Signs Report. When we understand the connections between our community issues, we can work together to strengthen them. Imagine what we could do together, now and for the future!



*Colleen Mulholland*

Colleen Mulholland  
President and CEO  
*Burlington Community Foundation*



# RESEARCH

The statistics contained in this report were compiled by Sage Research Corporation through a comprehensive review of a wide variety of research studies. Information is included from local, regional, provincial and national studies, and additional information was provided by our own local community agencies and organizations. The sources reviewed and used can be found in the Bibliography.

The report includes recently released data from Statistics Canada's 2011 Census, and 2011 National Household Survey. However, not all of the data for Burlington from these studies has been released yet, so in some cases 2006 Census data has been used.



# BURLINGTON: ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN CANADA

In 2013, MoneySense magazine ranked Burlington the top mid-sized city in which to live in Canada.

Indeed, people in Burlington take great pride in their community, the “jewel on the lake”. The unemployment rate in Burlington continues to be lower than Ontario as a whole, with over three-quarters of all jobs in Burlington being full-time, the highest share of full-time employment among the Halton municipalities.

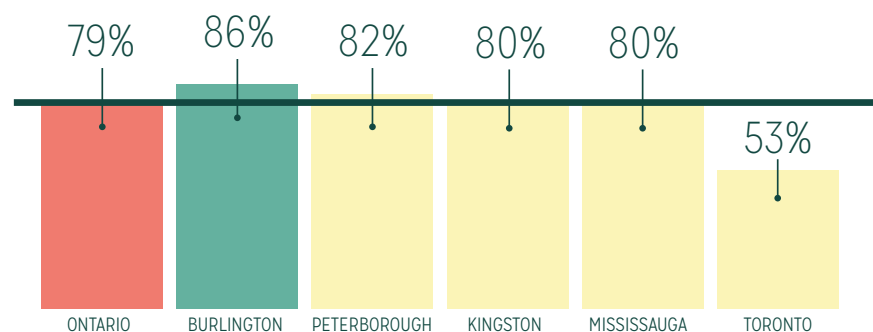
*“Mild weather, low unemployment, high incomes, low crime and a thriving arts community are just some of the factors making this the best mid-sized city in Canada.”*

*- MoneySense magazine, March 20, 2013*

## The face of our community



The majority commute to work by car, truck or van, more so than elsewhere in Ontario:



% that get to work by car, truck or van



In the last federal election, more turned out to vote in Burlington (66.5%) than the Ontario average (61.5%)



Median household income levels are 24% higher in Burlington than the provincial average but according to Statistics Canada, almost 1 in 10 youth under 18 lived in a low-income household.



In 2012, 36% of all items circulated by Burlington public libraries were in the child or youth category. Attendance at children and youth programs at Burlington libraries was 35,195.



Overall, the age profile of Burlington is getting older and more so than the Ontario average – in 2011, there were 29,720 seniors 65 years of age or older living in Burlington, comprising 16.9% of the population vs. 14.6% in Ontario.



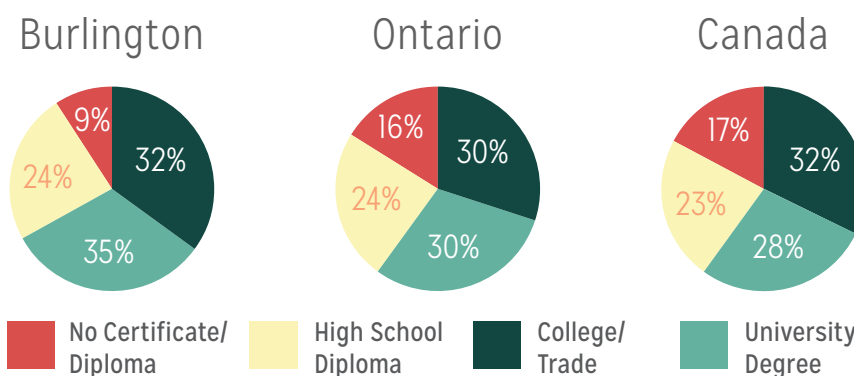
Young people in Burlington are performing well in school compared to the Ontario average but there are some opportunities for improving the lives and outcomes for our youth, starting as early as kindergarten. Some issues we need to tackle as a community are obesity, bullying and mental health.

# WORK & CAREERS

## Burlington has an educated labour pool

Burlington residents are better educated than the population of Ontario and Canada. 67% of Burlington adults 25 years of age and over have completed some form of post-secondary education, compared with 60% of the population of Ontario.

Among Burlingtonians 25–64 years of age, 95% have completed high school – this is a big positive change in a 10 year period: in 2001, 79% had completed high school.

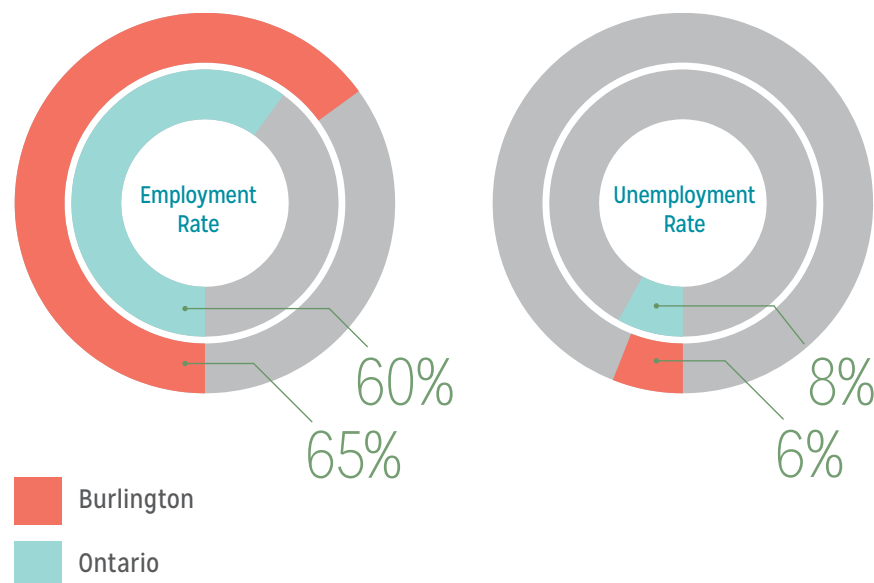


## Burlington is working!

In 2011, there were 143,510 people 15 years of age or older in Burlington. Within this age range, 93,030 people were employed and 5,755 were unemployed for a total labour force of 98,785.

Burlington has stronger employment statistics than Ontario as a whole. The employment rate among people 15–64 years of age was 65%, compared to 60% for Ontario. Burlington's unemployment rate was 6%, compared to 8% for Ontario.

For the past 10 years, the rate of unemployment in Burlington has been consistently lower than elsewhere in Ontario and in other communities across Canada.



## Profile of current jobs & businesses in Burlington

Here are some quick facts about jobs and businesses in Burlington, according to the Halton Region 2012 Employment Survey, released in June 2013:

- The City of Burlington has 4,638 businesses providing 74,216 full and part-time jobs.
- While Burlington accounts for 35% of the 15–64 year olds living in Halton Region, jobs in Burlington accounted for nearly 40% of Halton's total employment.
- Approximately 80% of jobs were in the service-based sector – the leading ones being the retail trade, professional, scientific and technical services, and health care and social assistance.

### INCOME LEVELS IN BURLINGTON

*Burlington has higher median household income levels than the rest of Ontario, although it is not high in comparison to other parts of Halton Region.*

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# ENVIRONMENT

## A city where people enjoy the outdoors

Burlington has 1,472 acres of city-owned parkland, and the city each year takes care of 60,000 trees, plants 600 new trees, and maintains 796 acres of grass. Most residents are within a 10-minute or less walk from green space. And these close connections to green spaces are valued by residents: 92% say being within walking distance of parks, trails and open green spaces would be very or somewhat important to them when making a decision about where to live.



## Responsible waste management

Burlington, together with neighbouring communities, is a recognized leader in responsible waste management. In 2012 Halton Region received several awards for its waste management programs:

- Gold Ontario Waste Minimization Award from the Recycling Council of Ontario: this award recognized Halton for achieving a 60% residential waste diversion rate – for comparison, the Ontario average is 47%.
- Gold Digital Promotion & Education Award from the Municipal Waste Association for the social media program, HaltonRecycles.
- Silver Landfill Management Award, from the Solid Waste Association of North America.



## Air quality good – but could be better

Burlington has good air quality, compared to downtown Hamilton. Hamilton has more poor to moderate air quality days (22%) than does Burlington (16%).

However, Burlington's location in southern Ontario – in Canada's manufacturing heartland and downwind from the industrial centre of the U.S. – increases the number of poor to moderate air quality days relative to more northern parts of Ontario and cities in other parts of Canada. For example, in each of Sudbury and Ottawa only 8% of the days in 2012 had poor to moderate air quality compared to 16% in Burlington.



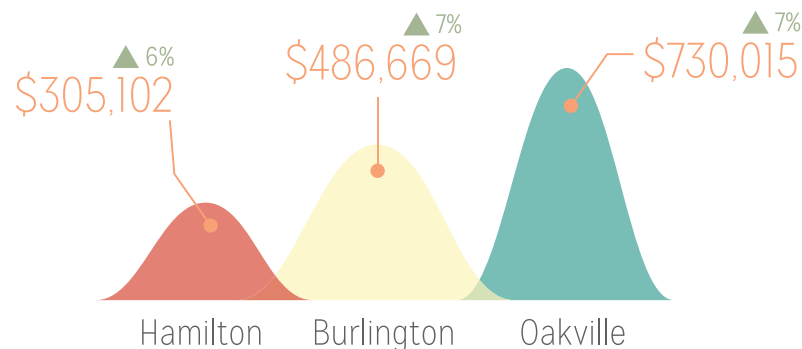
*Burlington Air Quality Days in 2012*

## HOUSING

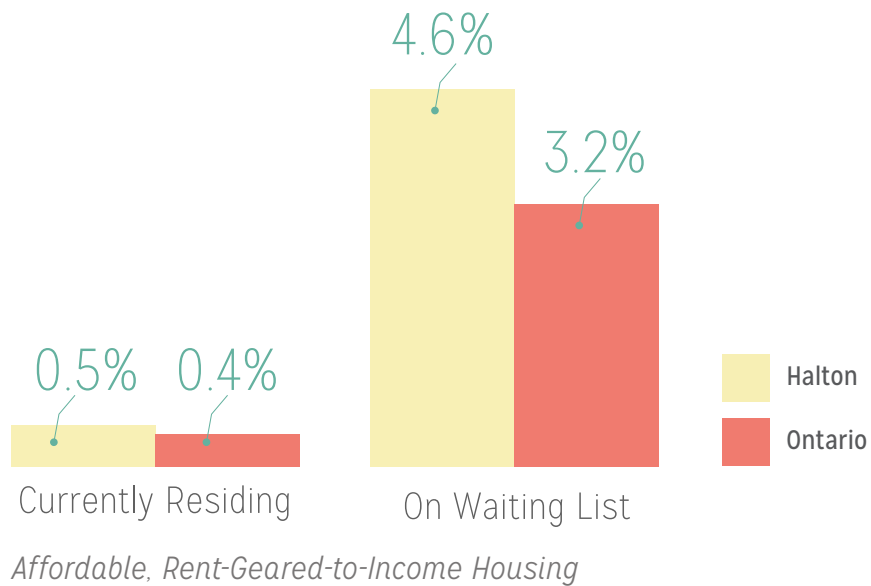
### Burlington Housing Prices Up 7%

The average price of a home in Burlington in the first half of 2013 was \$486,669 – up 7% from 2012.

Similar increases were seen in the neighbouring cities of Hamilton (+6%) and Oakville (+7%), with Burlington housing costs continuing to be intermediate between these two cities.



**HALTON HAS A LARGE AND GROWING  
SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE,  
RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME HOUSING.**



## Rental housing can be tough to find

People looking to rent – particularly those with more modest incomes – can find it difficult to find affordable rental housing in Burlington. In fall 2012, Burlington's rental vacancy rate was 1.3%. For reference, a vacancy rate of 3% is considered necessary for adequate competition and supply. By comparison, Hamilton's vacancy rate was 4.2%, and in Ontario as a whole it was 2.5%.

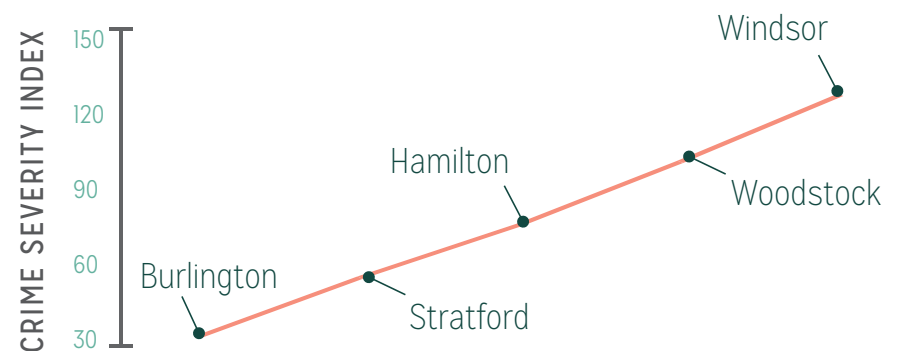
In 2011, Halton had a higher percentage of households (4.6%) on waiting lists for affordable, rent-geared-to-income housing than was the case for Ontario as a whole (3.2%). Further, the demand for this housing greatly exceeds the supply, as only 0.5% of Halton households were living in affordable, rent-geared-to-income housing in 2011.

In Halton, between 2010 and 2011 there was a 47% increase in households waiting for rent-geared-to-income housing. Families with children are the hardest hit.

# SAFETY

## We're one of the safest in Canada

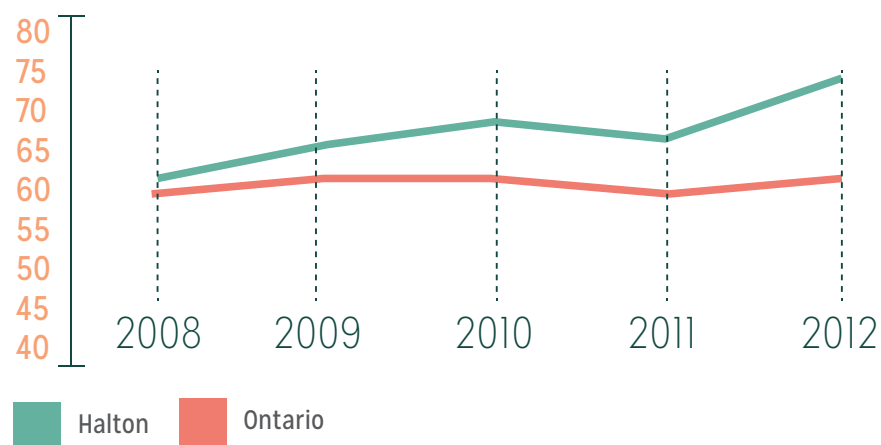
MoneySense magazine ranked Burlington as one of the safest cities among the 200 Canadian cities it analyzed in its feature, Canada's Best Places to Live 2013.



*MoneySense Magazine: Crime Severity Index for 200 Canadian Cities (Lower is Better)*

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

Residents of Halton are more likely to rate their overall health as “very good” or “excellent” (72%) compared with Ontario residents as a whole (61%). Moreover, positive health ratings increased from 2011 (66%) to 2012 (72%).



*% Rating General Health as “Very Good” or “Excellent”*

But, many Burlington residents still have preventable health risks.

## Some health risk red flags – healthy eating & activity level

Eating vegetables and fruit, and engaging in regular physical activity, contribute to a healthier lifestyle. However, only 39% of Burlington adults consume 5 or more servings per day, meaning 6 in 10 are eating well below the Canada’s Food Guide recommended level. Four in ten Burlington adults 18–69 years of age have only low to moderate levels of physical activity.

## Majority are overweight or obese

Over 75,000 Burlington residents 18 years of age and older are overweight or obese based on their self-reported height and weight. That’s just over half of the adult population who have an increased risk of certain health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, gallbladder disease, obstructive sleep apnea, and certain cancers.



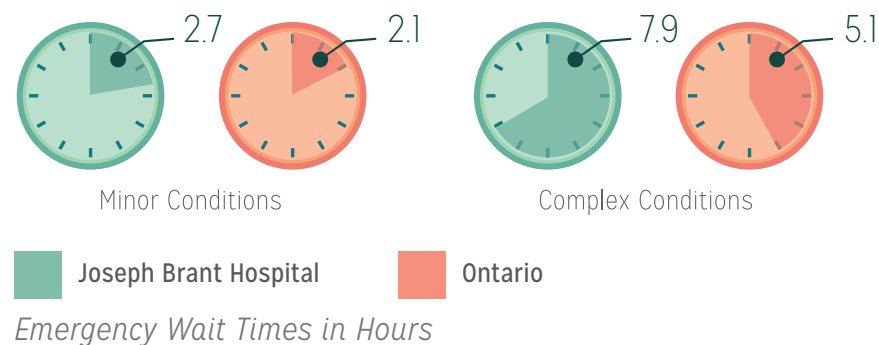


## Joseph Brant Hospital (JBH)

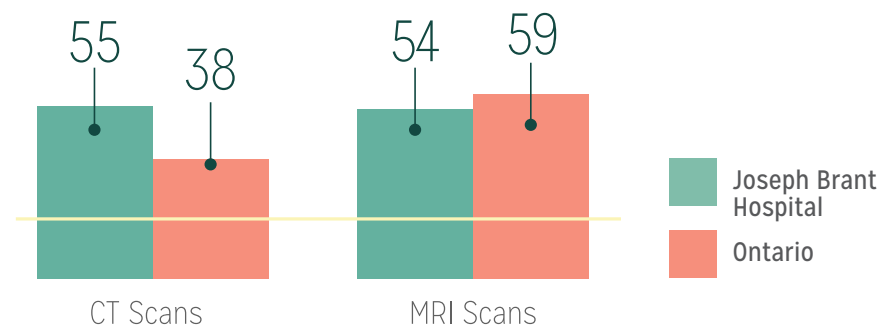
The Canadian Institute for Health Information tracks the performance of over 600 health care facilities across Canada on a variety of indicators of effectiveness of treatment, patient safety, appropriateness of treatment, and accessibility. JBH is either at or better than the Canadian average on all of the indicators.

### Wait times

- In June 2013, average emergency department wait times at JBH were somewhat longer than the provincial average.



- JBH had longer wait times than the provincial average for CT scans, but shorter wait times for MRI scans.

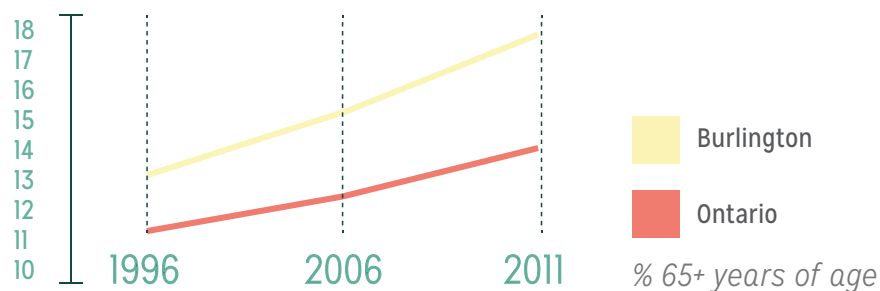


Medical Imaging Wait Times in Days

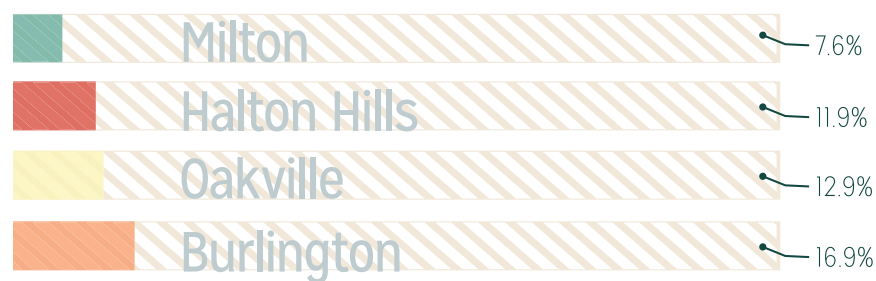
## SENIORS IN BURLINGTON

Canada's age profile is getting older, and this trend will continue for several decades into the future. For example, the proportion of people 65+ years of age in Ontario is expected to grow from 14.6% of the population in 2011 to over 23% by the year 2036.

Burlington's age profile has historically been older than that of Ontario as a whole, and the difference has been increasing over time. As of 2011, 16.9% of Burlington's population was 65 years of age or older, compared to 14.6% of Ontario's population.



Within Halton Region, Burlington has the oldest age profile, while Milton has the youngest.

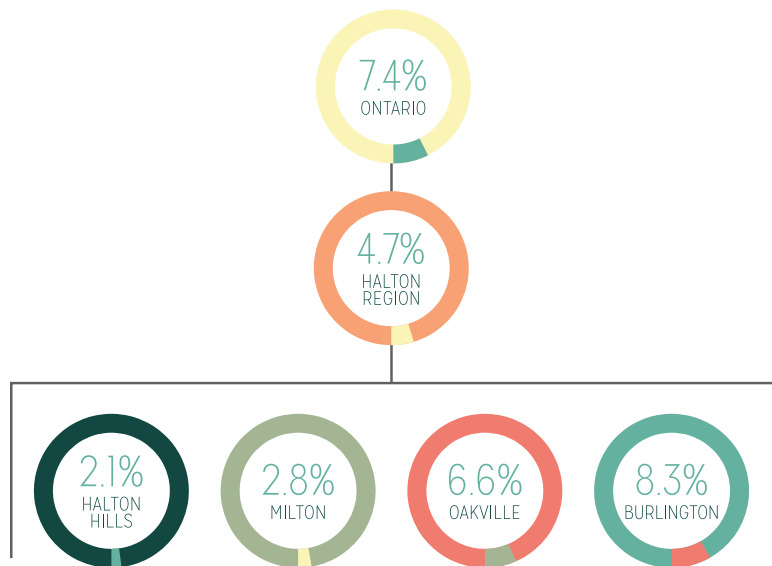


% Aged 65+ in the Halton Region



*Women comprise 57% of Burlington seniors overall, with this proportion being higher at the older age ranges: among Burlington residents 85+ years of age, 2 out of 3 are women.*

Based on Statistics Canada measures of low-income from the 2006 census, 5.6% of Burlington seniors have low income after tax. However, the prevalence of low income is particularly acute among female seniors in Burlington: this prevalence is higher than the Ontario average, and higher than other Halton region communities.



*% of Female Seniors  
with Low Income*



## Housing Costs

In 2006, about 1,800 senior households in Burlington spent 30% or more of their total household income before tax on mortgages, electricity, heat and municipal services. Of these, almost 500 spent 50% or more of their income on housing, which leaves very little money for food, medications, or other necessities.

In the Age-Friendly Communities Forum: A Seniors' Perspective – an initiative of the Elder Services Advisory Council In Halton Region – the Burlington participants identified a need for affordable housing as one of the top 3 issues for seniors in Burlington, and noted that "some people are moving out of the community as they cannot afford to live here."

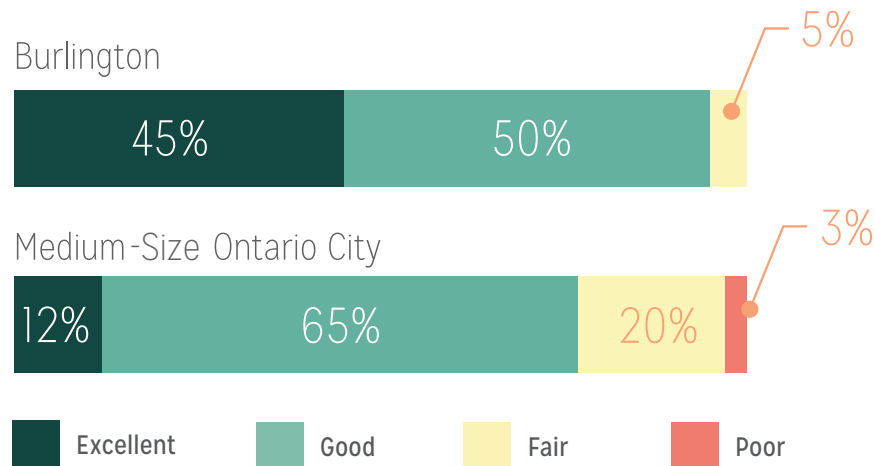
**SPENDING MORE THAN 30%  
OF YOUR INCOME ON HOUSING  
COSTS CAN MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT.**

# COMMUNITY SPIRIT

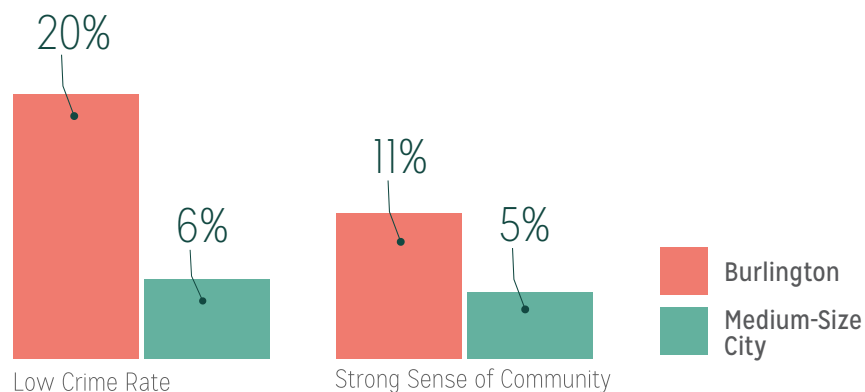
## Burlingtonians are in love with their city

In 2012, the City of Burlington conducted a survey of Burlington residents that included comparisons to residents of another similar medium-size Ontario city.

Burlingtonians are generally happy with life in Burlington: 95% rated the quality of life in Burlington as "excellent" or "good". And this is a much higher level of satisfaction than observed in the comparison city, particularly at the "excellent" end of the scale.



Quality of Life



### Greatest Impact on Quality of Life

Burlington residents tend to see the quality of life in the city as improving: 27% said the quality of life in Burlington has improved over the past two years, compared to only 11% who said it has declined.

Survey respondents were asked which factors had the greatest impact on quality of life in their city. What set Burlington residents apart particularly was the importance of a low crime rate, and a strong sense of community.

## VOLUNTEERING RATES ARE HIGH

In Halton Region, almost 6 in 10 (59%) people age 15 and over volunteer their time through an agency, a group or an organization. This exceeds the Ontario (48%) and national (47%) averages.



# ARTS & CULTURE

## Cultural experiences important to life in Burlington

In a survey of Burlington residents, 76% said culture is "essential" or "highly important" in their daily lives. There are many types of cultural experiences. For Burlington residents, the top 6 are festivals (86%), museum & local history (81%), art galleries (78%), going to the theatre (75%), public art (69%) and family heritage & traditions (69%).

Benefits to Burlington from community cultural organizations include:

- 624,000+ visits to local festivals, events, productions and exhibitions
- 89,000+ hours of cultural programming offered to all ages

Burlington residents spend 37% of their cultural time in Burlington, and the remaining time in other cities such as Toronto and Hamilton.

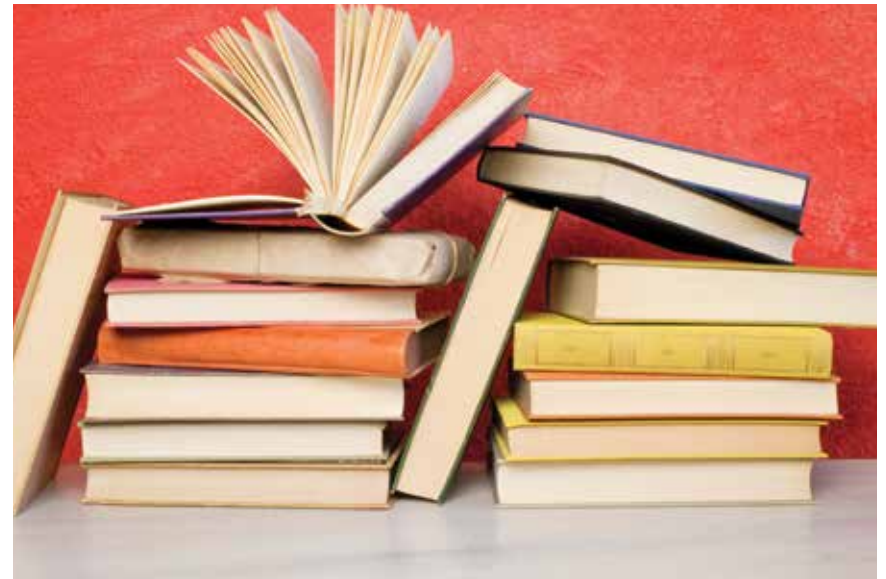


## Burlington's Public Libraries

Public libraries are an important community asset, and this is underlined by the fact that library use in Canada has increased 45% over the past decade. Burlington has 6 public libraries.

The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport provides comparisons of library usage across all Ontario cities in Burlington's size range. Some key facts about Burlington residents:

- We visit libraries more often
- We are more likely to use online library services
- We are about average in active library card holders



# INCOME & POVERTY IN BURLINGTON

Burlington is a prosperous and affluent community where its individual, household and family median income is higher than Ontario. However, some families are struggling to make ends meet.

## Lone-parent families struggle

In general, lone-parent families are much more at risk of being low income. Statistics Canada data (2008) shows that while 6.7% of all non-elderly families are low income in Canada, 18% of lone-parent families are low income.

Burlington has a lower proportion of lone-parent families (14.3% of families) than does Ontario as a whole (16.3%). However, the proportion of lone-parent families has grown faster over the 10 years in Burlington (up +19.2%) than in Ontario as a whole (+9.9%).

## What is a living wage in this area?

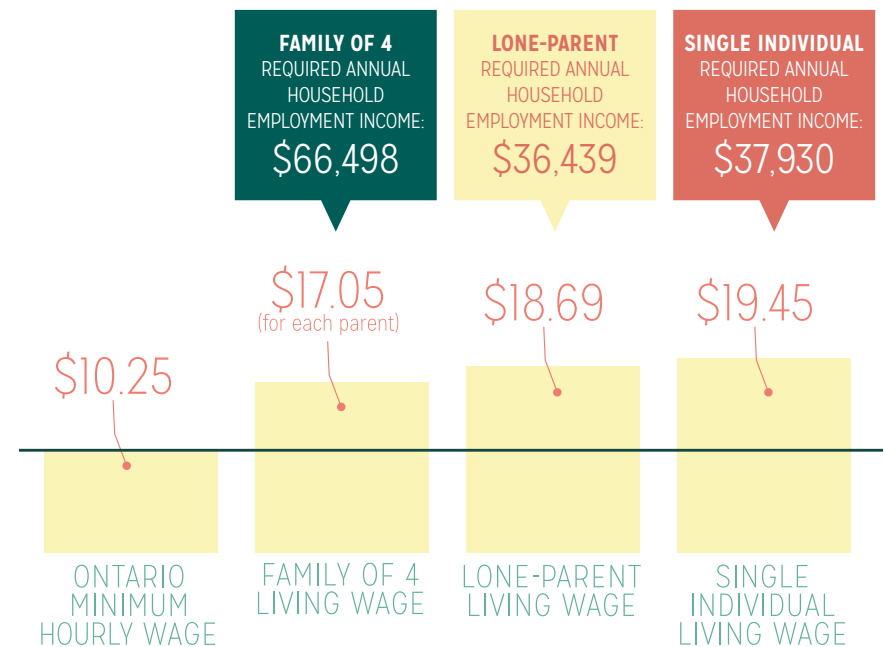
Ontario has a legally mandated minimum wage of \$10.25 an hour. However, a person working full-time at the minimum wage rate will be living in poverty, as they will earn less than Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-off.

The concept of a "living wage" is motivated by the following question: What does a family working full-time (37.5 hours a week, year-round) need to earn in order to pay for the necessities of life, to enjoy a decent quality of life, and to be able to participate fully in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the community?

The answer to this question depends on family composition and on where you live. Community Development Halton has tackled this question for the Halton Region, including Burlington.

What is included in a living wage, and what is excluded? "A living wage isn't extravagant. It doesn't allow families to save for retirement, to save for their children's education or to service their debt. But it does reflect the cost of affording the basics of life – something the minimum wage doesn't do," states the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Community Development Halton considered three types of Halton households: a family of 4 (two parents, two children – a boy age 10, and a girl age 14), a single-parent family (mother age 30 and a boy age 3), and a single person (male age 32). In each household, each adult is working full-time, year-round. The calculation of living wage reflects the typical costs in Halton, as well as taxes and benefits.



*Living Wage in Halton (assuming full-time, year-round employment)*

# PORTRAIT OF YOUTH: OUR FUTURE

The number of youth in Burlington has increased since 2006, but at a slower rate than older age groups. As a result, the overall age profile of Burlington is getting older.

AGE	% GROWTH IN BURLINGTON SINCE 2006
0 – 24	+3.5%
25 – 64	+5.9%
65+	+17.2%

## Youth more likely to be affected by low income

Burlington is an affluent community, but not everyone is well off. In the 2006 census, 7% of all residents lived in low income households. However, this was greater for youth under 18, where 9% – almost one in 10 youth – lived in a low income household.

## Kids – readiness to learn in Burlington

Our Kids Network in Halton has provided an extensive analysis of developmental readiness data collected on Halton and Ontario children in senior kindergarten: “Developmental readiness refers to the child’s ability to meet the task demands of school and benefit from the educational activities provided. The current concept of developmental readiness encompasses much more than academic skills; children’s physical, social, emotional, oral communication and cognitive skills contribute towards success in school.”

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) measures developmental readiness in kindergarteners on these various dimensions, and can be used to identify children who are developmentally vulnerable.

Kindergarteners in Burlington show a more positive readiness profile than children in Ontario generally. It is still the case though that one in five Burlington children are vulnerable in at least one developmental dimension, meaning they may require additional support to catch up with their peers.

Almost one in ten Burlington children are vulnerable on two or more developmental dimensions: “Children who score low on two or more domains are experiencing serious developmental issues. Longitudinal research in British Columbia has shown that increasing numbers of vulnerabilities across the five EDI domains predicts an increasing probability of failure to achieve basic competencies by Grade 4.”

	BURLINGTON	ONTARIO
Physical Health and Well-Being	12%	14%
Social Competence	7%	9%
Emotional Maturity	7%	10%
Language and Cognitive Development	4%	9%
Communication and General Knowledge	8%	12%
Vulnerable on 1 or more domains	20%	28%
Vulnerable on 2 or more domains	9%	14%

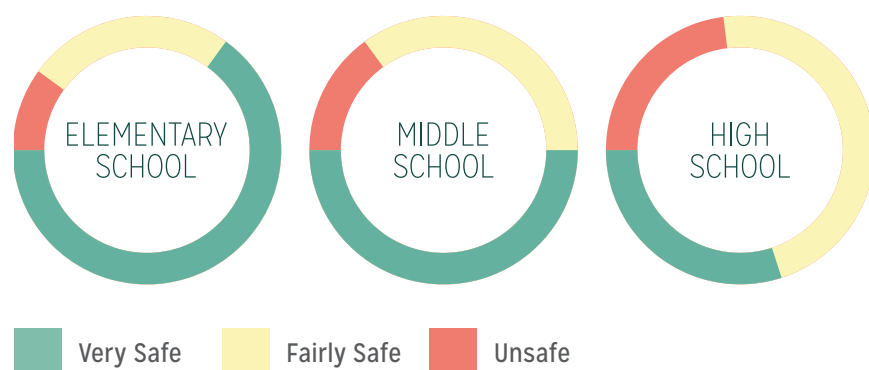


*The Conference Board of Canada City Magnets report on Canada's 50 largest cities ranked Burlington #1 on the number of elementary and secondary school teachers per 1,000 school-age children.*

## School age youth

Our Kids Network conducts the ongoing Halton Youth Survey to track over time the well-being of youth in Grades 7 and 10 in Burlington as well as other Halton communities. The latest survey in 2012–2013 identifies challenges and opportunities for improving the lives and outcomes for our youth.

**Bullying:** While there has been some improvement over time in reports of being bullied in school, it remains a serious issue. 30% of Burlington Grade 7s reported being bullied at school in the current school year, and bullying is still prevalent among Grade 10s (26%). The level of reported bullying in Grade 7 is similar to the Ontario provincial average at 30%.



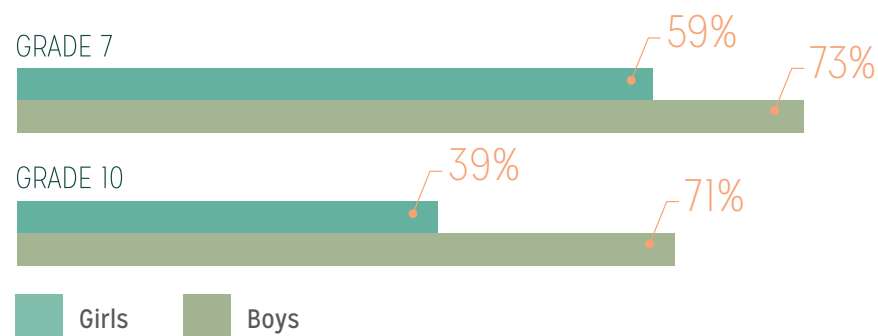
*Perceived Safety of Schools Among Halton Residents*

## Healthy level of physical activity

According to the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, youth 12–17 years of age require at least 60-minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity per day.

In the Halton Youth Survey, two-thirds of Burlington Grade 7s claimed to meet the 60-minute-per-day guideline, but only just over half of Grade 10s claimed to meet the guideline.

Girls in the Halton region were much less likely than boys to report meeting the physical activity guideline, with only four in ten Grade 10 girls meeting the guideline.



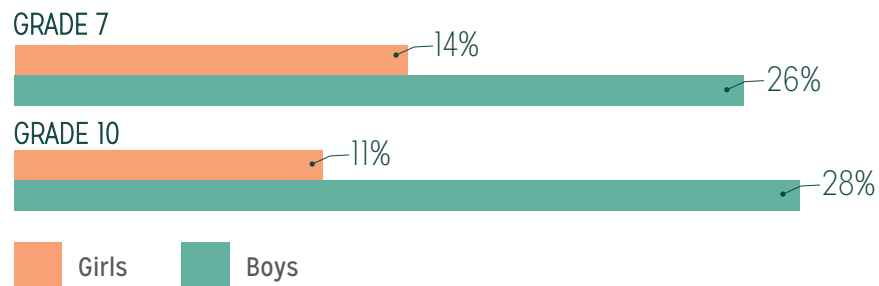
*% of Halton Students Who Self-report They Meet The Physical Activity Guideline*

## Healthy body weight

According to Statistics Canada, in 2010 18% of 12–17 year old Canadians were either overweight or obese based on their self-reported height and weight, with the level being higher among boys (21%) than girls (14%).

The Halton Youth Survey found similar results for Burlington and for Halton as a whole, with about one in five Grade 7 and 10 students being overweight or obese (based on self-reported height and weight).

In both grades, boys were much more likely to be overweight or obese than were girls.



*% of Halton Students Classified As Overweight or Obese*

In the qualitative research project, Halton Youth Voice Road Show (2011), Grade 10 students suggested the following reasons why obesity is a problem for youth:

- Fast food, processed food, and unhealthy cafeteria food
- Youth just choose not to eat healthy foods
- Youth could not afford to buy healthy foods
- After-school activities, such as soccer or dance class are expensive, making it difficult for many youth to participate
- Youth are less active because they're busy, don't feel like it, or decide to stop being active
- Parents don't watch what their children eat and give lunch money instead of making lunches

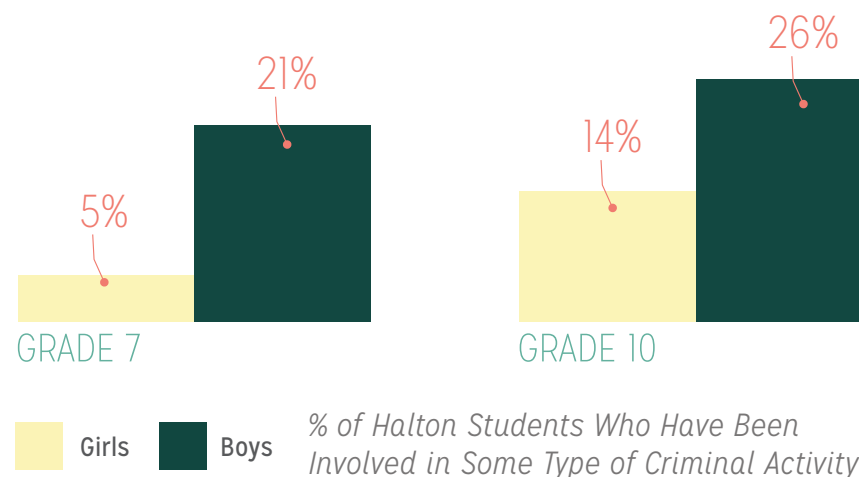
## Smoking, substance use & binge drinking

All have shown some declines since 2009–10 according to the Halton Youth Survey. Nonetheless, there continue to be reasons for concern:

- Among Burlington Grade 7s, the most common form of substance abuse is illegal use of pain relief pills, with 7% reporting such usage in the past 12 months – almost as high as the Grade 10 level of 9%.
- Among Burlington Grade 10s, one in five used cannabis in the past year, and one in three had an episode of heavy drinking in the past year.

## Crime

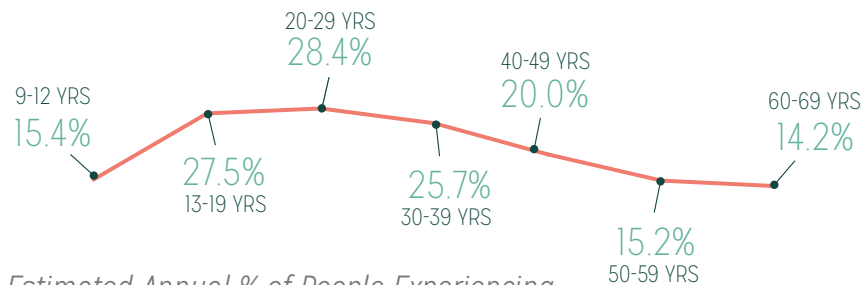
The Halton Youth Survey, conducted by the Halton Our Kids Network, developed an indicator of involvement in criminal activity based on four self-report questions asking about vandalism, carrying a weapon, selling drugs, and group or gang involvement, and these define what is meant here by "criminal activity". Note that because this is based on self-report, it includes not only youth accused of crime but also youth who "got away with it".



# MENTAL HEALTH – A VITAL ISSUE

One in five people in Ontario experiences a mental health problem or illness. Because mental illness can affect people in all walks of life, this is as important an issue in comparatively affluent communities like Burlington as it is in other less affluent communities. When you take into account family members and friends, almost everyone is affected in some way.

The childhood, teen and young adult years are a critical period for the onset of mental health problems. The number experiencing mental illness peaks at over one in four young people during the teen years and among people in their 20s.



*Estimated Annual % of People Experiencing a Mental Illness by Age in Canada*

*“Recent research in areas like diagnostic imaging and immunology point increasingly to the biological nature of mental health disorders. In other words, mental health disorders are truly health disorders similar to diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, etc.”*

*– Dr. Alan Brown, Chief of Psychiatry, Joseph Brant Hospital*

Mental illness affects people at all life-stages. However, one of the most significant characteristics of the onset of mental health problems is that, unlike many other illnesses, they are more likely to first emerge and affect people early in their lives.

According to a Mental Health Commission of Canada report, the potential negative effects of mental illness on the lives and prospects of young people are considerable:

“Mental disorders are the most common medical conditions causing disability in young people. Most mental disorders begin before age twenty-five and tend to be chronic, with substantial negative short and long-term outcomes. They are associated with poor academic and occupational success, economic burden, personal, interpersonal and family difficulties, increased risk for many physical illnesses and shorter life expectancy.”

Early detection and treatment of mental health problems is vital for the young people in our community and for the future health of our city.





## Access to youth mental health services is not what it needs to be

- Only one-third of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them.
- 71% of family physicians ranked access to psychiatrists in Ontario as fair to poor.
- While mental illnesses constitute more than 15% of the burden of disease in Canada, these illnesses receive only 5.5% of health care dollars.

ROCK reports that due to mental health funding gaps, as of March 2013, youth and families were waiting for just over 1,000 various services they offer. Wait times for these services range from months up to 2 years.

*Every \$1 spent on mental health issues and addictions saves \$7 in health costs and \$30 in lost productivity and social costs.*



## Suicide – a critical issue

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people in Canada. One of the most important causes of youth suicide is mental illness – most often depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance abuse. The effects of youth suicide go beyond the deceased, impacting those who survive their death – their parents, friends, peers, and communities.



A survey conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found that in response to the question, “In the last 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?”, 7% of Ontario Grade 7s and 12% of Grade 12s answered “yes.”

The Halton Youth Survey asked a somewhat different version of the question, focusing on teens who “sometimes, often or always” had thoughts of suicide in the past 12 months. While the question is somewhat different the results are similar: one in twenty (5%) Grade 7s in Burlington had thoughts about suicide in the past 12 months, increasing to over one in ten (13%) by Grade 10.

## Depression

Depression is a mood disorder characterized by intense negative emotions and feelings, that negatively impact on people's lives leading to social, educational, personal and family difficulties.

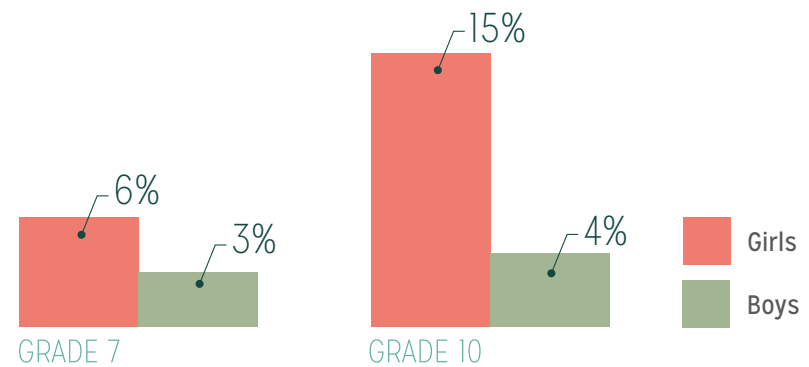
The Halton Youth Survey created an indicator of being at risk for depression, based on a person saying they "always" or "often" had experienced the following four emotional states in the past week: feeling sad, lonely, depressed, or like crying.

The percentage of Burlington students at risk for depression increases from Grade 7 to Grade 10, and by Grade 10, one in 10 teens are at risk for depression.

This increase in risk for depression from Grade 7 to Grade 10 is occurring primarily among girls. By Grade 10, one in seven girls is at risk for depression.

In the qualitative research project, Halton Youth Voice Road Show (2011), participants suggested the following causes for depression in youth:

- Being bullied, which was seen to lead not only to depression but also suicide
- Different social groups within a school bullying one another
- The fact that sometimes youth were just mean to each other
- Technology, since youth don't actually need to connect to each other on a personal level any more
- Images and expectations portrayed in the media
- The pursuit of material possessions, with participants saying that it would be better if youth just spent time hanging out instead of shopping
- Stress
- Not having friends
- Being pressured to do drugs



*% of Halton Students at Risk of Depression*



## Eating disorders – third most common chronic illness among adolescents

Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are the third most common chronic illness among adolescents. Eating disorders affect adolescents from all ethnicities, social classes and geographic locations. Up to 15 percent of people with serious eating disorders die.

Danielle's Place, located in Burlington, offers support programs and services to people affected by an eating disorder. They have

seen a dramatic increase in the percentage of clients under the age of 25, from 41% in 2012 to 56% in 2013. The number of clients under the age of 16 has doubled from 8% in 2012 to 16% in 2013.

While eating disorders are found among both girls and boys, they are more common among girls. A study found that unhealthy eating attitudes and behaviours were present in over 27% of Ontario girls aged 12–18 years, and these girls are at increased risk for the development of clinical eating disorders.

## Youth mental health trends at Joseph Brant Hospital (JBH)

Trips to the hospital emergency department because of a mental health issue represent the tip of the iceberg for youth mental health and substance abuse issues in Burlington. Emergency department visits can occur when mental health or substance abuse issues are undiagnosed, or are untreated, or treatment is not working. Youth visits to the JBH emergency department because of mental health or substance abuse problems show:

- Emergency department visits for mental health or substance abuse issues spikes upwards for youth 18–24 years of age.
- The annual number of youth under 25 years of age going to JBH emergency because of mental health or substance abuse issues has increased 30% over the last 3 years.
- The rate of increase has been even higher among the subset of youth under 18 years of age – showing an increase in emergency visits of 43% over the past 3 years.

JBH operates the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Consultation Clinic, which provides support to children/youth under the age of 18 years. The case load for the Clinic increased by 16% from 2010–11 to 2011–12, and the average wait time for assessment increased by 31%, to 47 days.

*“Mental health concerns cut across all socioeconomic levels, all races, both genders and across all age groups in our culture. In fact, 70% of all mental health disorders experienced in adulthood have their onset before the age of 18.”*

*– Dr. Alan Brown, Chief of Psychiatry,  
Joseph Brant Hospital*



## Mental health among seniors

In general, the prevalence of mental illness is greater among older seniors, and particularly older female seniors, where over one-third of those 80 years of age or older are estimated to have a mental illness.

In the 2009 wave of Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey, 88% of Halton seniors 65 and over rated their mental health as “very good” or “excellent”, and this was a higher level than for Ontario seniors generally (71%). Perceived mental health among Halton seniors is not as positive now as it was in 2009, and as of 2012 Halton seniors are close to the Ontario average of 70%: 72% of Halton seniors now rate their mental health as “very good” or “average”, meaning almost three in 10 have a less positive view of their mental health.

In a broader look at perceived mental health among older Halton adults 50+ years of age, Halton Region noted the following risk factors associated with lower self-perceived mental health:

- Living alone (74% positive mental health rating) compared to not living alone (81%)
- Have activity limitations (75% positive rating) compared to no activity limitations (88%)
- Living with pain (68% positive rating) compared to 84% among those not living with pain

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Burlington Community Foundation staff and Board of Directors, we hope that our 2nd edition of Burlington's Vital Signs provides you with an even deeper and more thoughtful understanding of the connections between the issues and opportunities facing our community.

When we developed our first edition of Burlington's Vital Signs in 2012, we hoped that it would help to inform productive conversations and encourage action on the key issues influencing our great city. Now, with the launch of our 2013 Vital Signs Report, we are pleased that conversations have begun and we will proactively work together with our partners and community leaders to inspire greater action in the year ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Dobbie'.

Tim Dobbie

Chair, Board of Directors

*Burlington Community Foundation*



# GLOSSARY

**AIR QUALITY INDEX:** The Air Quality Index is an indicator of air quality, based on air pollutants that have adverse effects on human health and the environment. The pollutants are ozone, fine particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and total reduced sulphur compounds.

**CRIME SEVERITY INDEX:** This is an index created by MoneySense that takes into account the following crime indicators: violent crime rates, total crime rates per 100,000 people, the five-year change in the crime rate and crime severity rates for 2010. A lower value is better.

**EMPLOYMENT RATE:** This is the percentage of working-age people who have jobs. It is the ratio of the total employed population over the total number of working-age people.

**LOW INCOME MEASURES:** References to low income in this report are based on Statistics Canada's Low Income Measures (LIM). The LIM is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted economic family income, where "adjusted" indicates that family size and composition are taken into account.

**MEDIAN:** This is the number which divides data into two equal groups, half having a value above that number, and half having a value below that number.

**RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME HOUSING:** Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing is rental housing in which the rent paid is determined by the household's income, normally about 30% of the gross monthly household income. Adjustments to RGI are made depending on what utilities are included or not included in the rent. If the household's income consists of social assistance, rent is charged at a set amount, according to the kind of benefits received and the number of people covered by social benefits. This amount is based on the rent scale set by the Ontario government instead of a 30% calculation.

**SENIORS:** For most purposes in this report, seniors are defined as people 65 years of age or older.

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:** The percentage of the total labour force that is unemployed but actively seeking employment and willing to work.

**YOUTH:** The age range referred to by "youth" varies with the topic. In this report, the focus was primarily on people 5 to 24 years of age.

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## Burlington Community Foundation: Strengthening Burlington with Gifts that Give Forever

Established in 1999 as a centre for philanthropy, Burlington Community Foundation is a local knowledge broker and one of the most reliable partners in the non-profit sector. We collaborate with donors to build endowments, give grants and connect leadership. Responsive to our donors, our grantmaking experts help people give, build legacies, address vital community needs and support areas of personal interest.

The Foundation helps people, agencies and corporations improve our city's vitality – today and tomorrow. Our grantmaking supports donor wishes and addresses the highest priority needs in our community. Each grant truly makes a difference to a person--a neighbour, a child, a senior.

Together, we are strengthening Burlington with gifts that give forever. Visit [burlingtonfoundation.org](http://burlingtonfoundation.org), follow @BurlingtonFDN or connect on Facebook to discover the many ways you can get involved.



3380 South Service Road, Unit 107  
Burlington, ON L7N 3J5  
905 639 0744

[info@burlingtonfoundation.org](mailto:info@burlingtonfoundation.org)  
[burlingtonfoundation.org](http://burlingtonfoundation.org)



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