



Pulling Together in West Vancouver

Over the past several years, the West Vancouver Police Department has intentionally deepened its relationship with local Squamish and Tseil-Waututh Nations with the help of a 29-foot canoe named Ch'ich'iyúy. As part of Pulling Together, an annual voyage created to build cultural bridges that lead to more culturally sensitive and responsive policing, police officers and First Nations youth spend ten days every summer paddling Ch'ich'iyúy as a team. The West Vancouver Community Foundation supported the purchase of the canoe and the 2017 voyage. "In order to make West Vancouver safe today and safer tomorrow," says WVPD Constable Jeff Wood, "we must harness the strength in diversity of our community."

Belonging by the numbers



SOURCE: National Vital Signs Report. "Belonging: Exploring Connection to Community." Community Foundations of Canada, 2015-2017.

as Canada continues to evolve into a country of large urban centres with growing visible-minority, Indigenous, and newcomer populations.

We have a collective responsibility to open up the urgent and deep conversations that must occur in our communities right now. Belonging connects to some of today's most pressing conversations about refugee settlement, workplace diversity, gender equality, and reconciliation. We must encourage social participation while recognizing and transcending the barriers, both overt and hidden, that prevent it from happening. This includes improving the systems that underpin our society and influencing the ways in which people experience belonging or non-belonging every day.

Canada's sesquicentennial offers us an opportunity to reflect on the many ways in which we can build the foundations of belonging, not just through laws and policies, but also through local leadership and investments that help strengthen relationships between neighbours, coworkers, families, and friends. The country is in a unique position on the global stage to show how multiculturalism and pluralism can bring communities together, advance economic prosperity through innovation, and deepen cultural awareness.

Looking back at the scale of change over the past 150 years, it's hard not to wonder where Canada's communities will be in the future. That's why it's vitally important for us to examine how we can work together to create a more welcoming society. Belonging, after all, is not just a feeling; it's a powerful catalyst for healthier communities and a more inclusive Canada.

BELONGING: EXPLORING CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

For more information about our three-year journey exploring belonging in Canada, visit communityfoundations.ca/vitalsigns

