Individuals' sense of belonging and being connected is essential to a healthy community.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

5 GENDER EQUALITY

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

COMMUNITY POTENTIAL

Niagara Connects

LIVING IN NIAGARA REPORT **2023**

Happening Now

- Efforts to integrate services provided by settlement agencies with those offered by mainstream health and human services agencies is helping to bridge language and cultural barriers experienced by newcomers to Niagara.

- Voices of individuals with lived experience are being engaged, to inform planning and decision-making for delivery of health and community services in Niagara. In 2022, 1200+ older adults 50+ in Niagara completed an Age-Friendly Niagara Survey. Response themes include: supports to age in home; health/wellness promotion; importance of connected generations; and an increase in recreation/ leisure/learning opportunities, housing options, and information about programs/ services available to older adults.

- More than 3,600 volunteers in Niagara worked to make the 2022 Canada Summer Games a success, with 5,000+ athletes participating in 18 sports and 250+ events.

- The 2023 Niagara Region Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan is intended to support diverse community members to feel welcomed and included, leading to positive health and well-being for all residents and visitors. A resulting Community of Practice (CoP) will address DEI issues in the community by sharing resources, learning about DEI topics, and incorporating DEI into Human Resource practices.

- Voter turnout rates in Niagara in 2021 and 2022 for federal, provincial and municipal elections align with national and provincial rates.

What's Emerging

- Increased emphasis is being put on intentionally reflecting the changing face of Niagara, by engaging diverse individuals in strengthening our community.

- Unprecedented demand on services, combined with a reduction in charitable giving is putting pressure on non-profit agencies and their workers.

- Various social prescribing approaches are underway, to strengthen health and well-being by reducing barriers for people to connect to meaningful activities in their communities.

- Shifts in volunteering patterns have led to organizations examining how they engage, support, train, communicate with, and empower their volunteer workforce.

- Strengthening digital literacy, access to the internet, and awareness of how social media shapes communication among people of all ages are increasingly seen as key to individuals' ability to connect with, and participate in their communities.

Suggested Community Action Steps

- Identify ways to mitigate effects of increased demand on charitable and non-profit organizations, their staff and volunteer workforce.

- Continue to strengthen Niagara as an equitable, diverse, inclusive, welcoming community with opportunities for participation for all people.

- Encourage participation through a range of opportunities for individuals of all ages and interests, e.g., volunteering, coaching, intergenerational transfer of knowledge/exchange of skills, and opportunities to connect with others through events.

- Describe the current state of the volunteering landscape in Niagara. Do this to identify measurable ways to maximize the impact of volunteering, for both individual volunteers, and the organizations that are engaging volunteers in their work.

- Continue to encourage voter turnout rates in Niagara by supporting access to information and voting options, for vulnerable individuals.

Indicators

- **Charitable Giving**
- **Immigrants, Refugees, and International Students in Niagara**
- **Sense of Community Belonging**
- **Trust in Others**
- **Volunteering**
- **Voter Turnout**