

**Bill Fisch, B.Com., LLB**  
Chairman & C.E.O.



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The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, M.P.P.  
Minister of Community and Social Services  
Hepburn Block, 6th Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Meilleur:

**Re: York Region Social Audit Report**

I am writing to provide you with a copy of the recently released report of the 2010 York Region social audit, *Behind the Masks – Testimonials from Those Marginalized by Income*. I have included the related staff report to the January 2011 York Region Community and Health Services Committee.

York Region was one of 24 local social audits organized across Ontario by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) to enable people living in poverty to share their stories and engage the community on key issues. The 2010 process was the first ISARC social audit conducted in The Regional Municipality of York. The social audit, co-convened in York Region by the Poverty Action for Change Coalition and the York Region Food Network in April 2010, provided an invaluable community-led forum for over 60 residents, front-line service agencies and municipal and regional officials to discuss the impact of poverty in our communities.

York Regional Council was presented with the final report of the York Region social audit on January 27, 2010, where Council also endorsed, in principle, the themes and recommendations contained in the report. From our Council's perspective, the York Region social audit is a positive step in giving voice to some of the most vulnerable members of our community, and raising awareness about the root causes, individual and societal costs, and impacts of poverty. The report will play an important role in building on our ongoing efforts within York Region to reduce poverty and promote healthy communities.

As part of Council's endorsement, and in support of the social audit's goal to inform policy and program development at all levels of government, we also urge that this social audit report be forwarded for consideration by the Province's recently established Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario (the Commission). The report provides a community lens to many of the issues we anticipate will be central to the Commission's work over the next 18 months.