

THE VANIER INSTITUTE OF THE FAMILY



2008 Annual Report



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As we began 2008, very few people could have predicted the many dramatic events that would occur and the impact they would have on Canada and Canadian families. The collapse of the American banking system, financial institutions and mortgage markets led to the worst financial crisis since the Depression, and to a global recession. Major efforts are being made by governments around the world to try to stabilize their economies and their countries. Here in Canada, hundreds of thousands of families are experiencing layoffs, bankruptcies, or shrinking retirement income.

Against this backdrop, the Vanier Institute of the Family strives to help the public, the media and policy-makers understand the important issues that are currently facing Canadian families. The ninth annual *The Current State of Canadian Family Finances: 2007 Report* was commissioned from Roger Sauvé. The analysis in the report revealed the growing debt load of Canadian families and examined the basic necessities that the poorest families must do without. The increased use of this report and the many VIF products over the past year is testimony to the value and importance placed on the Institute's concise, balanced and practical information about families in Canada.

The Executive Director, Clarence Lochhead, and the staff of the Vanier Institute had another very busy and productive year. The *Contemporary Family Trends Papers*, *Transition* magazine, and *Fascinating Families* web feature dealt with a variety of issues such as family finances, the environment, work/life balance, food, and mobility. Initial work began on the data collection for the next edition of *Profiling Canada's Families*, a resource and reference tool that gives factual insights into the circumstances of Canadian families. The Institute is committed to understanding regional issues that affect families, and Clarence and the staff were engaged in speaking opportunities in several of the provinces and territories.

The Board of the Vanier Institute of the Family and the staff work together as a team and we operate by consensus. Over the past year, this has allowed for numerous successes, including: revisions to the Investment policy, the development of a planning cycle to create an Annual Program Plan, Board discussions on membership, and very prudent financial management. Clarence and the staff are to be congratulated for their diligence in financial administration and their meticulous exploration of important family issues.

BACKGROUND ON THE VANIER INSTITUTE OF THE FAMILY

The Vanier Institute of the Family is an independent, national, bilingual, non-profit institute committed to promoting the well-being of Canadian families. The Institute was established in 1965 under the patronage of Their Excellencies Governor General Georges P. Vanier and Madame Pauline Vanier.

Canada's families come in many different shapes and sizes. And in their ethnic background, beliefs, character and economic status, they are as varied as the Canadian mosaic. Nevertheless, family is a universal fact of life since every human being is moulded by family ties and experiences. The late Governor General and Madame Vanier knew that when a nation works to strengthen its families, it strengthens every individual citizen, as well as the society as a whole.

From their perspective as Canadian leaders, the Vaniers saw the need for an independent institute to:

- Build public understanding of important issues and trends affecting the healthy functioning of Canadian families.
- Foster a society that identifies and provides for the needs and aspirations of families.
- Encourage a family perspective among policy-makers, service providers, employers, educators and others whose work affects the lives of families.
- Promote the inherent capacity of families to help themselves.

The Vanier Institute of the Family fulfills its mandate through many activities, especially:

Research and Analysis: VIF undertakes and commissions research on Canadian families and the context in which families nurture their members and contribute to their communities. Using data distilled from many sources – academia, government, social agencies and other primary research groups – VIF moulds complex facts and figures into accessible, authoritative information available to all Canadians.

Public Education: Through publications, media interviews, presentations and Internet publishing, VIF keeps Canadians up-to-date on issues pertaining to families. As a public resource, VIF provides informed and sophisticated advice and critiques of social policy. It is the single most relied-upon source of concise, balanced and practical information on families in Canada.

Partnership: VIF enlarges its capacity to contribute to Canadian society by developing strategic partnerships with public and private institutions, corporations, the media and the non-profit sector.

THE WORK OF THE VANIER INSTITUTE OF THE FAMILY

Contemporary Family Trends

VIF commissions and publishes papers written by Canadian experts on a wide range of topics of relevance to families in Canada. Our Contemporary Family Trends papers contribute to the discussion of important family issues by making current knowledge on families available to researchers and policy-makers, educators and students, businesses and social service agencies, media and other interested parties. The papers are published both in print and on our website.

Published in 2008:

Rediscovering the Family Meal

By Bernard Roy, Nurse, PhD; Judith Petitpas, BSc

The authors, Bernard Roy (Nurse, PhD) and Judith Petitpas (BSc), defend the view that the family meal must be considered of vital importance since the dinner table is a crucial place for socialization, education, value transmission, and identity building.

They raise two important issues:

- The increasingly rare incidence of the family meal in Canada and other Western countries. Studies show that fewer and fewer Canadian families eat their meals together. This situation can be attributed to parents being pressed for time and to the independence of young people, who are devoting more and more time to social, community, or work-related activities.
- A loss of meaning in food consumption. The authors believe the strictly rational and restrictive approaches to food championed by certain health sectors risk dividing rather than strengthening families.

When addressing poor eating habits, it is important to take into account the notion of pleasure and the affective and relational aspect of food consumption.

The authors' findings are based in part on a field investigation of aboriginal women on Quebec's North Shore.



Contemporary Family Trends

Rediscovering the Family Meal
Bernard Roy, Nurse, PhD; Judith Petitpas, BSc
June 2008

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Families and the Environment: Understanding, Cultivating and Celebrating their Links

By Barbara Vogt

This report examines what today's environmental problems mean for Canada's families - the impacts of environment on family life, and the impact of family life on the environment.

Highlights include:

- Urban sprawl and suburbs have widened the distances between home, work and community services. For a great many families, the result is a higher daily dependence on the automobile, entailing losses of time and money, generating pollution, and cutting down on physical exercise.
- Children's vulnerability – From the earliest stages of development to the end of their growing years, children are most vulnerable to environmental pollutions.

Author Barbara Vogt writes that, "Families are faced with a huge challenge: understanding environmental problems and knowing what to do about them".



Transition

Transition, a quarterly, bilingual magazine, is VIF's flagship for public education on Canada's families. Each issue of the magazine features several engaging articles on a particular theme of relevance to families, as well as news about Canadian groups working on behalf of families.

Published since 1970 by the Vanier Institute of the Family, **Transition** is widely read and well-respected by policy-makers, researchers, educators, students, journalists, family-service workers, doctors, lawyers, parents and many others interested in family issues.

The print run for **Transition** is 3,500 copies, but the actual readership is much higher: 10,500 is a conservative estimate. Readers often pass the magazine on to friends, family members and co-workers. The magazine also appears on the VIF website, where it is read by many more people.

In high schools and universities, many educators use **Transition** as a classroom resource. Other organizations photocopy and distribute our articles, or reprint them in their own publications.

Although we have no way to measure the full impact of **Transition**, 35 years of publishing the magazine have taught us that it has a considerable "ripple effect" in Canadian society. This influence can be accounted for by its quality, by VIF's reputation as a balanced, reliable source, and by the fact that **Transition** is read by people who are in a position to influence others – teachers, journalists, parents, government officials, politicians, corporate leaders and others.

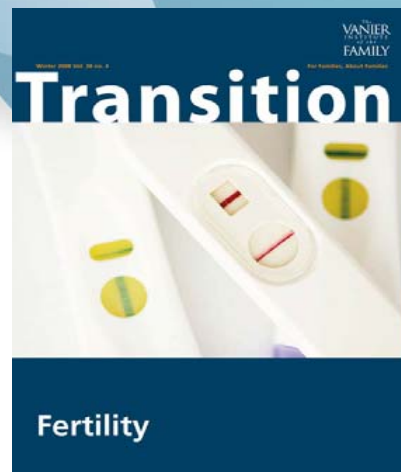
2008 Transition Titles

Spring:
“*Families and the Environment*”

Summer:
“*Families on the Move*”

Autumn:
“*Families Apart*”

Winter:
“*Fertility*”



2008 Transition Editorial Contributors

VIF's in-house expertise was greatly supplemented by the following outside experts who donated their time, research and writing for use in *Transition*:

Elaine Lowe, editor of *Transition* magazine.

Simone Hanchet, Master's degree student conducting her thesis research on Canadian environmental education policy at Concordia University.

David Chernushenko, a sustainable living advocate, member of Canada's National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, and owner of the consulting firm, Green & Gold, Inc.

Dr. Margrit Eichler, Professor of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

Barri Cohen, a Toronto writer, editor and filmmaker.

The Honourable Landon Pearson, former Senator (1994-2005), children's rights advocate and Officer of the Order of Canada.

Dr. Norah Keating, Professor in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta and Co-director of Research on Aging Policies and Practice.

Sylvie Nadeau-Janelle, spouse of a military serviceman and mother of three.

Jenni Tipper, Research Associate at The Vanier Institute of the Family.

Clarence Lochhead, Executive Director of The Vanier Institute of the Family.

Ingrid Vollmer, court-affiliated family mediator in Peterborough, ON.

Dr. Robert Glossop, former Executive Director of Programs and Research for The Vanier Institute of the Family.

Mark Wheeler, recently retired after 35 years in the Strategic Policy Branch of Health Canada.

Fascinating Families

A web feature that builds on VIF's expertise in monitoring family trends and in making complex statistics accessible and understandable to a wide audience. Published on the 15th of each month, *Fascinating Families* highlights timely, family-related facts and uses a "family lens" to frame a brief discussion of the implications for families in Canada.

This feature is designed for journalists, policy makers, educators, students and, anyone interested in understanding the strengths of Canadian families and the challenges they face. Hyperlinks to related resources and research are provided whenever possible.

Issues of *Fascinating Families* in 2008:

Fertility Intentions: If, When and How Many?

Finding a "Forever Family"

Grandmother, Grand-père, Anaanatsiaq, Popo...

Pack Your Bags, we're moving!

Reading the Household Books

Fathers Matter

Assortative Marriage - Who is marrying whom?

Family Friendly Environmental Policies

Saving Next to Nothing

Paid work and housework combined... lone parents do the most

Fascinating Families

The Vanier Institute of the Family

Finding a "Forever Family"

November is Adoption Awareness Month. Adoption awareness includes educating, promoting, and learning about adoptions. This month is also meant as an opportunity to recognize the families involved in adoption and to acknowledge that there are thousands of children and teens (in Canada and around the world) waiting to be adopted.

In 2004, there were over 66,000 kids in foster care in Canada. About one-third of these children are Crown wards (parental rights have been terminated by the courts) and available for adoption. Many of these children are of school age or teens, have special needs or are part of a sibling group, which often makes them harder to place in a permanent home. There are roughly 1,700 public adoptions (a public agency matches a child with you) and 1,000 private adoptions (you find a child or a birthmother chooses you to raise her child) occurring in Canada each year (www.familyhelper.net).

Source: Adoption Council of Canada (www.adoption.ca)

In 2006, 1,535 children were adopted into Canadian families from abroad. Forty percent of these children came from China (Half at a distant 2nd at 8%), with the remainder from countries across the globe (www.adoption.ca). The majority of adoptions are girls between 0-4 years of age (57% in 2006, followed by 0-4 year old boys at 27%). The number of international adoptions has been on the decline since 2003, and fell by 18% between 2005-2006 (see Figure 1).

Family Lens

Adoptive families are part of the diversity that make up families in Canada. Like all families, adoptive families are also changing and evolving. According to Kerry Daly, PhD, "Adoptions used to be kept secret and out of sight in order to uphold the pretence of the biological family. Birth mothers were directed to relinquish the child - to sever all ties and adoptive parents were directed to raise the child as if it was their own. This was an atmosphere of shame and marginalization. Over the years, adoption has moved to a practice of greater openness whereby birth mothers maintain various forms of connection with their adopted children, the children themselves grow up with more information about themselves and adoptive parents can drop the pretence of having to live with the falsehood of being a biological family" (http://www.vifamily.ca/about/daily_speech.html).

Fascinating Families Issue no 12

Canadian Family Finances Program

VIF's Canadian Family Finances program produces an annual report on family finances and publishes it on our website. We commission Roger Sauvé, President of People Patterns Consulting, to research and write the reports, which are of particular interest to politicians, journalists, business leaders, teachers, family professionals and counsellors. By monitoring family finances every year, we keep Canadians informed of the latest patterns and trends in family incomes, expenditures, savings and debt. The report clearly meets a need, as proven by the tremendous media interest it generates each year.



The Current State of Canadian Family Finances: 2007 Report

by Roger Sauvé, President of People Patterns Consulting

Hourly Earnings Rise, But Family Incomes Don't Keep Up With Debt.

So reports the ninth annual *Current State of Family Finances – 2007 Report*. This well-respected and timely report examines the latest trends in incomes, spending, savings, debt and net worth across family and household types.

The author also includes a special feature that examines what the poorest fifth of households do without. These cash-strapped families skip on food, are less likely to own a car and the majority have just given up the dream of home ownership. They also have to scrimp on things like recreation, kids' camps, dental insurance, current technologies, travel, jewelry, live sporting events and much more.

Other important findings include:

- A record 32% of workers aged 55 continue to work.
- Spurred by geographic labour shortages, hourly wage gains have now outpaced price increases for the second year in a row.
- Household incomes are rising but debt has risen seven times faster since 1990 – to an average total debt of over \$80,000 per household and is now equal to a record 131% of household incomes.
- Real net worth increased by 18% since 2000 due mostly to the strength of the real estate market.
- About 200,000 more Canadians are poor now than in 1990, up to 3.4 million.

The Vanier Institute of the Family's Website

www.vifamily.ca

The VIF website is increasingly where people go for their information about Canadian families. There were 1,582,473 page views in 2008 and 144,522 PDF copies of our reports were downloaded. The busiest months for the site were March and April, followed closely by the month of May. All of the publications mentioned in the annual report are available on our website. More than 1000 Canadians received our electronic newsletter in 2008. The newsletter informs subscribers when new publications are posted to the site.

Some materials posted to the VIF website in 2008 include:

Contemporary Family Trends

Rediscovering the Family Meal

Families and the Environment: Understanding, Cultivating and Celebrating their Links

Family Finances

The Current State of Canadian Family Finances: 2007 Report

Transition

Fertility. Winter 2008, Vol. 38-4

Families Apart. Autumn 2008, Vol. 38-3

Families on the Move. Summer 2008, Vol. 38-2

Families and the Environment. Spring 2008, Vol. 38-1

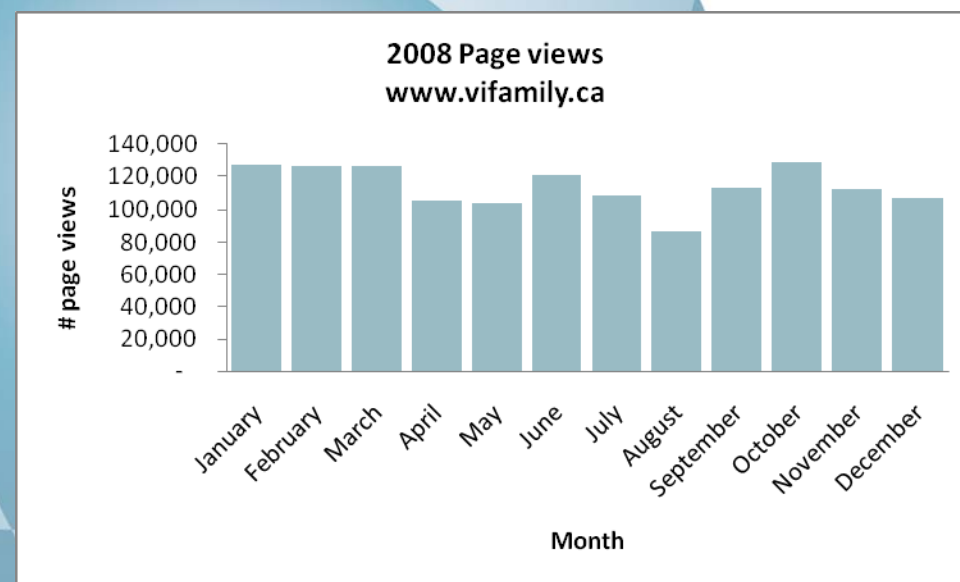
Press Releases

The Environment is a Family Concern

Hourly Earnings Rise, But Family Incomes Don't Keep Up With Debt

Commentary

In Search of a Tipping Point: The Literacy Conundrum in Canada, by former Vanier Institute President, Allan D. Mackay



Public Education

The Institute engages a diverse range of audiences from a variety of platforms to discuss family trends and issues, to consider new options, and to improve the circumstances and life chances of families.

Media Relations

The Institute has a very effective media relations program. It is an indispensable tool for alerting the Canadian public to the realities of modern family life. Each year, as journalists quote our spokespeople on a wide range of family issues, potentially harmful myths about families are replaced by facts and informed opinions.

In 2008, VIF staff responded to hundreds of media requests for interviews, commentary, and background information. They responded to queries and gave interviews in English and French to a wide variety of television, radio and print media.

Many of these requests were prompted by VIF press releases, such as new Contemporary Family Trends (CFT) papers and the annual family finances report, both of which generate a great deal of interest from most media. Other media inquiries arose in response to news stories that relate to family issues for which the Institute is understood to have some expertise and which are reported below.



What is a "media hit"?

The VIF staff uses Microsoft Access to monitor and record those news stories making direct reference to the VIF.

Each news story is counted as a media hit.

Media Hits, 2008, The Vanier Institute of the Family							
	Media Type						
	Newspaper	Magazine	Radio	TV	Web¹	Newswire²	Total
British Columbia	13		4				17
Alberta	8		3				11
Saskatchewan	6		3				9
Manitoba	8		5	1			14
Ontario	70		14	1			85
Quebec	10		7				17
New Brunswick	5		1				6
Nova Scotia	6						6
Prince Edward Island							0
Newfoundland and Labrador	3						3
Yukon Territory	1						1
Northwest Territory							0
Nunavut							0
National	18	5	9	9	6	15	62
Total	148	5	46	11	6	15	231
*excludes references to VIF on blogs							
¹ "Web" accounts for media hits that appeared on a website (not affiliated with a newspaper or broadcaster, e.g. canoe.ca)							
² A "Newswire" is an organization of journalists that supply their stories to all other media types (e.g. The Canadian Press).							

Selected Interviews and Media Hits from 2008

Newspapers:

- Financial Post: *Home-Preneurs want it all* [December 22nd, 2008]
 National Post: *My wedding my biggest one-day loss* [November 8th, 2008]
 National Post: *Canada in midst of mini baby boom: report* [September 26th, 2008]
 The Montreal Gazette: *Millions of Canadians have trouble reading* [September 7th, 2008]
 The Toronto Star: *When 8 kids is enough* [September 3rd, 2008]
 Financial Post: *Reflecting on one of life's big numbers* [July 12th, 2008]
 The Globe and Mail: *The daddy shift* [June 24th, 2008]
 Yukon News: *The kids are alright* [June 11th, 2008]
 Vancouver Sun: *What does it mean to be civil? 10 rules* [April 4th, 2008]
 The Hamilton Spectator: *Mealtime is family time* [March 20th, 2008]
 Financial Post: *No break for me this March* [March 1st, 2008]
 The Globe and Mail: *Our shopping lists: more gadgets than groceries* [February 27th, 2008]
 La Presse (Montreal): *La dette totale des Canadiens dépasse 80 000\$ par ménage* [February 11th, 2008]
 The Ottawa Citizen: *Does Canada need a baby Boom ?* [February 4th, 2008]
 The Toronto Star: *Are parents too protective?* [January 5th, 2008]

Web:

- CBC.ca: *We're more in debt; but less delinquent, Equifax says* [February 28th, 2008]
 Fotf.ca: *Families carrying record debt load* [February 20th, 2008]
 Realtytimes.com: *As House Prices Rise, Canadians are Saving "Next to Nothing"* [February 19th, 2008]
 Canadian Economic Press: *Budget Makers Should target Efforts To Fight Poverty, Economist Says* [February 12th, 2008]
 Canoe.ca: *Flat incomes and steep spending equal record household debt: report* [February 11th, 2008]
 InvestmentExecutive.com: *Family incomes not keeping pace with debt: Vanier Institute* [February 11th, 2008]
 CBC.ca: *Flat incomes and steep spending equal record household debt: report* [February 12th, 2008]



Newsire:

CNW Group: *“Monkey See, Monkey Do,” as teens adopt their parents’ approach to money matters* [October 30th, 2008]

Canwest News Service: *Canadian women in 30s having more babies* [September 26th, 2008]

Canwest News Service: *New tax-free account appeals to higher-income earners: Vanier Institute* [February 27th, 2008]

The Canadian Press: *Flat incomes and steep spending equal record household debt: report* [February 12th, 2008]

CNW Group: *Hourly earning rise, but family incomes don’t keep up with debt* [February 11th, 2008]

Radio:

680 News: *Is U.S.-style housing crash a foreshadowing of Canada’s future?* [March 19th, 2008]

580 CFRA: *Canadians Facing Record Debt: Report* [February 12th, 2008]

News1130: *Report finds hourly wages are rising but debt is also climbing at a faster rate* [February 11th, 2008]

680 News: *Flat incomes and steep spending equal record household debt: report* [February 12th, 2008]

News 1130: *Flat incomes and steep spending equal record household debt: report* [February 12th, 2008]

570 News: *Flat incomes and steep spending equal record household debt: report* [February 12th, 2008]

940 Montreal: *Flat incomes and steep spending equal record household debt: report* [February 12th, 2008]

TV:

CTV: *Families getting squeezed during hard times* [November 13th, 2008]

Magazines:

Canadian Business: *Financial crisis: Different this time?* [April 14th, 2008]



Consultations and Collaborations

VIF staff members regularly serve as expert advisors and consultants to community projects, government departments and non-profit organizations. Our commitment to partnership is evident in our staff's ongoing participation as members of boards of directors and advisory committees, and our participation in specific projects.

Selected Ongoing Consultations and Collaborations:

- Roger Sauvé – The Current State of Canadian Family Finances - 2008 Report; Profiling Canada's Families IV
- Media Awareness Network
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada - Families and Caregivers Branch
- Towards 2020 Conference (scheduled for April 26-29th, 2009)
- National Judicial Institute
- Janet Fast – Co-Director of Research on Aging, Policies and Practice, Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta.
- Advisory Committee, University of Alberta, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences

Speeches and Presentations

- Keynote, 2nd International Child Support Conference hosted by the National Child Support Enforcement Association (Vancouver, March 10th, 2008)
- Guest speaker, Father Involvement Research Alliance Policy Roundtable (Ottawa, April 2nd, 2008)
- Guest speaker, Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Home Economics Association (Ottawa, May 24th, 2008)
- Speaker, Vanier Catholic Secondary School (Whitehorse, June 10th, 2008)
- Speaker, Department of Education (Whitehorse, June 10th, 2008)
- Speaker, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition (Whitehorse, June 10th, 2008)
- Keynote, Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Social Services (Edmonton, June 12th, 2008)
- Speaker, "Peer Helpers" of the Employee Assistance Program at the Department of National Defence (Ottawa, September 24th, 2008)
- Speaker, Bishop Smith Catholic High School (Pembroke, December 11th, 2008)

Fund Development

To ensure a secure financial future for the Institute and its work, the Board of Directors' Investment Committee carefully manages the VIF Endowment Fund. The portfolio, combined with careful management of operating funds, continues to provide the Institute with the core financial resources needed to carry out its program of research, public engagements, and publications, including *Contemporary Family Trends* papers and *Transition* magazine. Given the current condition in equity and financial markets, the value of the Endowment Fund has declined, placing significant pressure on annual operating revenue. As a result, prudent financial management and fund development activities remain vitally important to the long-term sustainability of the Institute.

The Institute also seeks partnerships with governments and corporations for an appropriate fit within an increasingly competitive fund-raising environment. The Institute continues to explore new directions for its fundraising activities to ensure the return on investment in this area is a meaningful one.

Our efforts during 2008 were successful in garnering over \$40,000 in new funds. Unless targeted otherwise, donations were used at the discretion of the Institute, including over \$17,000 in membership revenues and over \$13,000 in individual, memorial and corporate donations.

2008 Highlights

Membership revenue	\$17,105
Individual, memorial and corporate donations	\$13,941
Grants (anonymous donors)	\$10,300

(For detailed contributor information, please see the Contributors on page 16).

Financial Report

The 2008 audited financial statements for the Vanier Institute of the Family show that revenue received in the general operating section was \$905,630 with expenditures of \$852,398, for a year-end surplus of \$53,232. In 2008, expenditures from the GPV Fund totalled \$8,149. A total of \$358,662 remains available in the GPV Fund for future projects. The year ended with a cumulative surplus in the operating section of \$177,421.

Revenue from the Endowment Fund for Endowment Fund Projects was \$10,927. The cumulative surplus in these funds is \$100,223.

Grants totalling \$10,300 were received in 2008 for future projects.

Organizational Donors

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Adlerian Counselling & Consulting
Wawanesa Insurance

Beutel, Goodman
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Contributors

The Vanier Institute of the Family gratefully acknowledges all those who have contributed to our activities in 2008. Many people generously contributed their time to research and write articles for publication in *Transition*. Please see “2008 *Transition* Editorial Contributors” on page 6.

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