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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**WINNIPEG**-Low-income parents in Winnipeg -- whether they are working or on welfare -- do not have enough money to adequately feed, shelter and clothe themselves and their children.

More than a dozen Winnipeg Harvest clients, acting as consultants, today released the 2012 Acceptable Living Level (ALL) for four family types. The 2012 Acceptable Living Level Report sets out how much disposable income is needed in the marketplace to buy a basket of goods and services that can sustain a fair, modest and acceptable living level.

The report demonstrates that current welfare rates, even when federal child benefits are taken into account, fall far short of meeting the 2012 Acceptable Living Level. Even two parents working full-time at minimum wage jobs have incomes far below the 2012 Acceptable Living Level.

The work of the consultants, embodied in the 2012 Acceptable Living Level (ALL) Report, was sponsored by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and Winnipeg Harvest.

Catherine Compeau, consultant, low-income panel comments, "It's important for everyone to know that low-income families are not getting enough income to properly nurture their families".

This year's report adds the voice of individuals who live with a chronic illness. Cathie Sauve Clarke, consultant, chronic-illness panel comments, "The inclusion of chronic illness needs for ALL hopefully will be read, thought about and somehow felt by those who will be using this information as basis for bettering living conditions for all Manitobans".

"This report – tells it like it is – what it costs to live in Winnipeg. The work that the consultants and Harvest put into this study lays out the facts. Now it's up to us to do something about them, says Dennis Lewycky, executive director, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.

David Northcott, executive director, Winnipeg Harvest says, "These are the voices we need to listen to and put the lens on to make social change".

In the spirit of Paulo Freire and other social justice commentators, both organizations strongly support initiatives which give voice to people living with hunger and poverty. Both organizations invite everyone in the community to study the basket of goods and services at the heart of the 2012 ALL Report.

Ask yourselves: What would I add? What would I take out? But when doing so, imagine you are answering for your own family, not someone else's. Could you send your own child to a friend's birthday party without a gift?

This report challenges Manitoba's leaders and citizens to respond to the central issue it raises:

**How can Manitoba ensure an acceptable living level for all its citizens?**

The consultants' definition of an acceptable living level is set out in the report.

Winnipeg Harvest and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg would like to engage with all citizens in building a society in which food banks are no longer necessary because hunger and poverty no longer exist. The ALL Report is offered as a key tool in advancing that mission.

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