

# Engaging citizens to create a helping community



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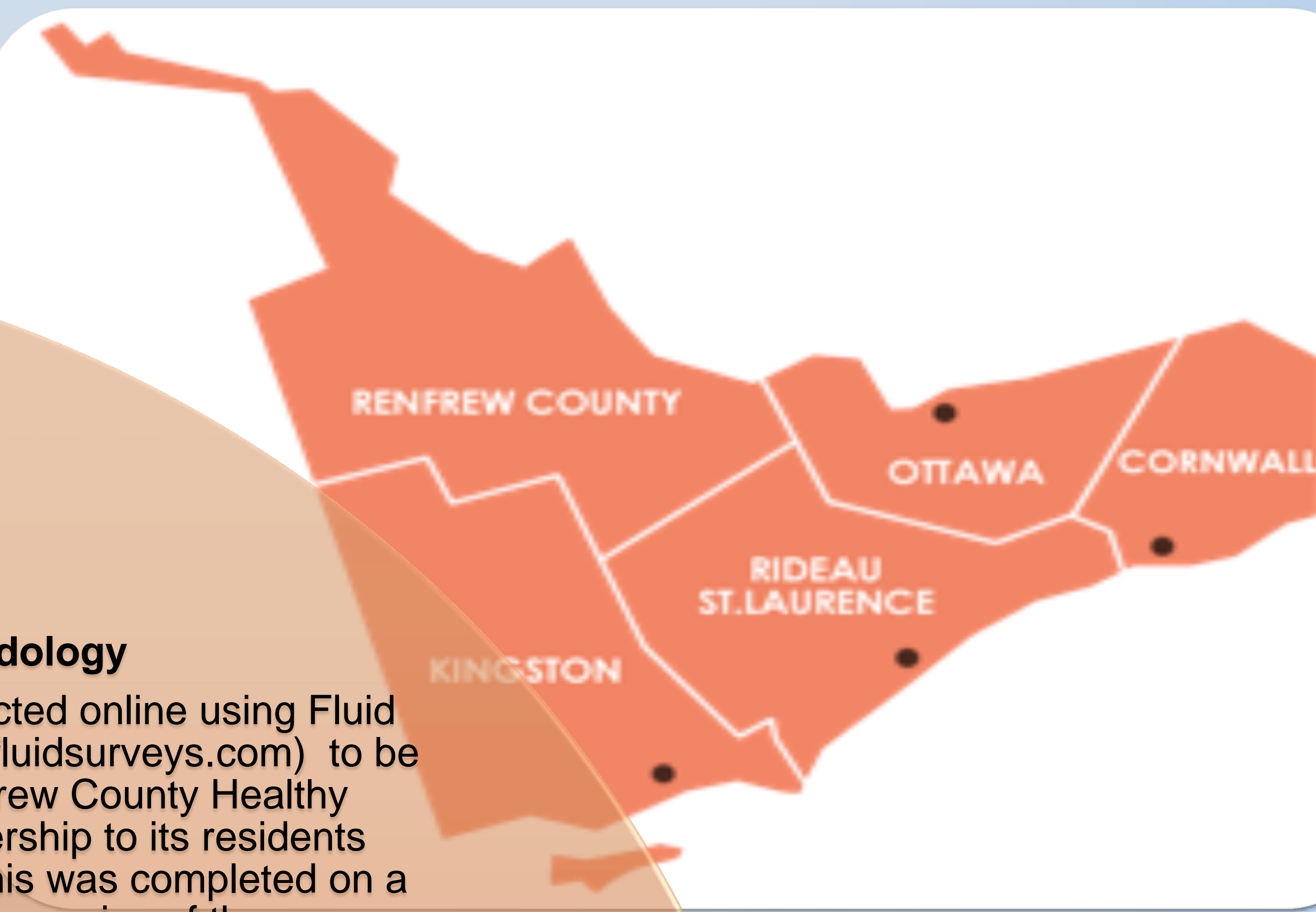
- “...volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation.”  
-2011 United Nations State of the World’s Volunteerism Report

## Objective & Implications

The objective of this study is to identify causes of low formal volunteering rates in Renfrew County, ON relative to nearby urban areas. This is accomplished by 1) identifying barriers and facilitators to volunteering in Renfrew County 2) learning how volunteers and potential volunteers would like to be apprised of volunteer opportunities in Renfrew County 3) learn what organizations and municipalities could do to encourage volunteers and to help them with volunteering. Once mediating factors of low volunteerism are identified, Renfrew will use this information to apply for a Trillium Grant, which would enable them to address the barriers and provide facilitators to encourage participation in their community. The information will also be available for non-profit organizations in other Canadian rural areas.

## Methodology

A survey was constructed online using Fluid Survey (<http://uottawa.fluidsurveys.com>) to be distributed by Renfrew County Healthy Communities Partnership to its residents through list serves. This was completed on a volunteer-basis. Paper copies of the survey were made available at community centers and offices of non-profit organizations to be completed and submitted in the mail. Data was entered into, and analyzed on, SPSS and organized into themes using qualitative methods. A prize draw was implemented to attract participants. Those who completed the survey had a chance to enter a prize draw to receive one of three \$50 Chapters gift card, one of fifteen \$10 gift certificates to Tim Horton’s.



## Acknowledgements

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If you have any inquiries, please contact Dr. Kristjansson, or myself, Jessica Lee ([jlee336@uottawa.ca](mailto:jlee336@uottawa.ca)).

## Furthering research

This study was conducted to fill the gap in knowledge about the region-specific challenges and prompts to volunteering in Canada. Although comparative research has identified individual characteristics of active volunteers, less has been done to understand communal influences.

When the regional perspective has been considered, it has centered around provinces, largely ignoring the differences between urban and rural areas. When rural areas have been studied, they generally boast higher formal volunteerism rates than urban settings. Renfrew County, however, does not follow the trend. This could be due to any one or a combination of the following factors: lack of awareness of available opportunities, inefficiency of information dissemination, lack of ties to the community, or lack of time. In illuminating the specific needs and motivators for people of their own County, the study serves to help Renfrew serve their community.

## References & Sources

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