

2

FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM UPDATE 2008

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated April 2, 2009, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities, the Minister of Community and Social Services and the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the Family Strengthening Programs administered by the Community and Health Services Department. Programs in this initiative are:

- All Our Kids Early Child Development and Parenting Programs
- Ontario Works/Social Housing Summer Day Camp
- Family Child Care Provider Training
- Positive Leisure Activities for Youth
- After School Programs in Social Housing Sites
- Youth Leadership Camp

3. BACKGROUND

Family Strengthening Programs offer a range of programs and services for low-income families in York Region

These programs are delivered at no cost to families and are designed to support and strengthen family and child development. Family Strengthening Programs are responsive to the needs of low-income families and provide access to:

- Parenting supports and community resources.
- Community based programs and services.
- School readiness programs.

Families who are eligible and most likely to participate are those with a low income, recent immigrants, and/or those in need of parenting supports and services. These programs offer families access to community based activities by removing barriers such as user fees and transportation costs, and by helping agencies establish programs in low-income and immigrant communities.

Family Strengthening Programs provide a range of benefits for children, parents and communities

The Community and Health Services Department's Family Strengthening initiatives are designed in response to research which indicates that investing in Family Strengthening Programs can be effective in helping to reduce dependency on social assistance, health and other social services. These programs recognize the importance of the family structure to the economic and social well being of the parent, and to the development of the child.

Family Strengthening Programs help to promote:

- Increased employment supports and opportunities for parents.
- Improved social, emotional and educational outcomes for the children.
- Stable, healthy lifestyles for families and improved ability to achieve independence.
- Opportunities for families to engage in their communities.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Family Strengthening Programs are responsive to the needs of children and their families

Attachment 1 provides an overview of the Family Strengthening initiatives administered by the Social Services Branch of the Community and Health Services Department in 2008. The number of children and youth accessing the programs has increased from 2004 when a total of 4,512 participated, to 2008, which saw 5,655 children and youth accessing programs including the All Our Kids program, Summer Camp programs, and recreational activities.

York Region collaborates with community agencies to provide coordinated service delivery

The Community and Health Services Department works in collaboration with children's mental health agencies, municipal recreation departments, resource centres, child care agencies, and Ontario Early Years Centres. Funding is administered and programs are monitored and evaluated through Purchase of Service Agreements.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2008, Family Strengthening Program gross expenditures totalled \$720,455. Approximately 68% of these costs were funded through National Child Benefit related funds. The remaining costs were funded through Community Development Investment Fund 100% municipal funding, and managed within the Department's approved budget. Table 1 outlines the program expenditures. These funds supported the delivery of services to over 5,600 children and their families.

Table 1
Program Expenditure and Revenue 2008 and 2009

Family Strengthening Programs	2008 Gross Expenditure	2009 Expenditure Approval
All Our Kids	\$228,768	\$210,000
Ontario Works and Social Housing Summer Camps	254,575	270,000
Supports to Informal Child Care Provider Training	90,000	90,000
Positive Leisure Activities for Youth	65,994	71,000
After School Programs in Social Housing	63,430	98,395
Youth Leadership Camp	17,688	20,000
Total	\$720,455	\$759,395
Sources of Revenue	2008 Revenue	2009 Revenue
National Child Benefit Initiative	\$489,258	\$0.00
Tax Levy in Budget Approval	231,197	\$759,395
Total	\$720,455	\$759,395

In 2008, the Province withdrew the National Child Benefit Initiative. On November 15, 2007 Council approved municipal funds to replace these withdrawn provincial funds through the adoption of Clause No. 2 of Report No. 9 of the Community Services and Housing Committee. On April 24, 2008, Council approved additional funds for Community Development Investment Fund program costs through the adoption of Clause No. 1 of Report No. 3 of the Community Services and Housing Committee.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Community and Health Services Department works with a variety of stakeholders, including local municipal recreation departments, to provide York Region families and

their children with access to quality programs within their local municipalities which promote healthy child development and parental attachment to the workforce.

7. CONCLUSION

The Community and Health Services Department remains committed to work in partnership with the community to continue to expand and enhance Family Strengthening Programs that are high quality, delivered cost effectively and continue to respond to identified needs. The Community and Health Services Department recognizes the importance of family structure to the economic and social well being of the parent and to the development of the child's full potential.

As part of York Region's Family Strengthening initiatives, departmental branches will continue to work together to provide innovative and responsive programs and services which support better economic and social outcomes for families.

For more information on this report, please contact David Rennie, General Manager of Social Services at Ext. 2013.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

FAMILY STRENGTHENING INITIATIVES FOR 2008

Program	Key Activities	Eligibility Criteria	Served in 2008	Community Partners
All Our Kids	- Provides York Region families with access to quality early child development and parenting centres - Programs are intended to promote readiness to learn - Programs are delivered by community agencies in sites across York Region	- Children age birth to 6 years - Parents, grandparents and caregivers residing in York Region	4,133 children 2,863 families/ caregivers	- Kinark Children and Family Services - Blue Hills Children and Family Centre - Pathways for Children, Youth and Families - Family Day Care Services - Bathurst Jewish Community Centre - City of Vaughan, Recreation and Culture Department - YMCA of Greater Toronto - York Region Neighbourhood Services - York Professional Care and Education Inc.
Ontario Works and Social Housing Summer Camps	Provides children of all abilities with access to summer recreational programs offered by local municipal Parks and Recreation Departments	- Children of Ontario Works participants - Children of social housing residents	308 children of Ontario Works participants 72 children of social housing residents	Parks and Recreation Departments within all nine municipalities
Supports to Informal Child Care Provider Training	- Training program representing unregulated child care sectors - Strategy is to enhance the quality of care received by families and their children residing in York Region - Promotes quality and stable child care options for families in the Region	Unregulated child care providers residing in York Region	386 graduates	York Professional Care and Education Inc

Program	Key Activities	Eligibility Criteria	Served in 2008	Community Partners
Positive Leisure Activities for Youth	Provides children and youth with access to municipal Recreation and Sport Programs	- Children age 4 to 12 years and youth age 13 to 18 years, of Ontario Works participants - Children age 4 to 12 years and youth 13 to 18 years of parents in receipt of Child Care Fee Assistance - Children age 4 to 12 years and youth 13 to 18 years of parents residing in social housing	898 children	Parks and Recreation Departments within all nine municipalities
After School Programs in Social Housing	- Provide a free-of-charge, after school program to children residing in four social housing sites in York Region - Provide a safe and positive after school environment which promotes positive social, emotional and physical development to children with various needs	Children age 6 to 12 years residing in social housing sites	176 children from 139 families	York Professional Care and Education Inc.
Youth Leadership Camp	Provides Youth age 11 to 17 years with an opportunity to attend residential camps (Newport Adventure Camp and Hidden Bay Camp) for one week during the summer	- Residents of York Region age 11 to 17 years residing in a social housing community and/or receiving Ontario Works - Youth must have parental consent	60 youth attended Newport Adventure Camp 8 youth attended Hidden Bay Leadership Camp	- The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada - York Professional Care and Education Inc.