

6

SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION TO THE COMMUNITY SPORT OPPORTUNITY FUND

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, May 25, 2004, from the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information by Committee and Council.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee and Council of the successful application to the Community Sport Opportunity Fund, administered by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation.

As a result, project funding of \$45,000 will enable the Positive Leisure Activities for Youth Project (P.L.A.Y.) to proceed.

3. BACKGROUND

The intent of the Community Sport Opportunity Fund is to:

- Provide new opportunities for children and youth (0 – 18 years of age) of low income families to participate in sport and recreation activities.
- Build on existing community opportunities to increase and expand current participation with an emphasis on skill building and leadership programs.

3.1 Research Findings

Numerous studies have demonstrated that children and youth who are involved in regular recreational and sport activities have increased self-confidence, higher self esteem, an improved self-image and positive peer and social interactions which contribute to strengthening children and strengthening families and communities. (*Source: The Benefits Catalogue, 1997*).

3.2 Reason for Application

The Community Services and Housing Department, led by Family and Children's Services Division, made application to the Community Sport Opportunity Fund in order to use alternate sources of revenue to facilitate a number of Regionally based initiatives, which support the research findings on the benefits of recreation programming.

These initiatives increase and expand on current participation by children of Ontario Works participants and social housing residents in summer day camp and after school programs funded through the National Child Benefit (NCB).

3.3 Partners

The Community Services and Housing Department has effective working relationships with local municipal recreation departments and community agencies also looking for alternate sources of revenue to provide subsidized recreation and leadership opportunities for children of low income families.

3.4 The Application Process

The Family and Children's Services Division completed the application in the fall of 2003 and confirmed to the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (MTR) that partnership agreements, in principal, were secured with each local municipal recreation department and the Boys and Girls Club of York Region.

Regional staff were informed by MTR that funding had been approved due to the quality of the application, the regional scope of the initiative, the experience York Region has as a funding and program administrator and the unique approach this project will take to increase access while building on existing programs currently funded by York Region through NCB funding.

Project funding commences in 2004 and ends December 31, 2005. A post-project report, which is required by the Ministry, will also be provided to Regional Council.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Outcomes

The P.L.A.Y. project will accomplish the following key objectives:

- Provide eligible children, (low income, financial assisted, recipients of subsidized housing), aged 6 – 12 years access to approved recreation programs throughout the year.
- Increase funding to the After School Program at four Housing York Inc. family sites.
- Provide scholarships to eligible youth (low income and/or residing in social housing) to participate in leadership courses such as Aquatic Lifeguarding and Leader-In-Training.
- Encourage employment and volunteer opportunities within the human service sector in York Region.
- Consider a sustainability plan to secure alternate sources of revenue in order to continue the project beyond the funded period.
- Formalize an alliance of social service and recreation organizations to work collaboratively.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

This project supports the following action areas:

- Fostering effective working relationships with community agencies.
- Responding to children in need.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A requirement of the Community Sport Opportunity Fund is a 50% match in contributions or in-kind services. York Region has matched the \$45,000 grant with \$38,600 in NCB funding and \$6,400 in-kind contributions. York Region's NCB funding has been approved by Council in the 2004 budget as part of the Community Development and Investment Fund strategy.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The implementation of this project will increase service to targeted populations within each area municipality using an alternate source of revenue.

7. CONCLUSION

The Community Sport Opportunity Fund is an alternate source of revenue that will enable children of low income, eligible families throughout York Region to participate in local recreation programming and leadership courses.

Research supports the benefits participation has in the lives of all children, youth and families, especially those living in poverty.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.