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SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH PROMOTION COMMUNITIES IN ACTION FUND

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, August 28, 2007, from the Commissioner of Community Services, Housing and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be circulated by the Regional Clerk to the local municipalities for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs Regional Council of our successful application for \$70,000 in project funding from the Communities in Action Fund administered by the Ministry of Health Promotion and describes how this funding will be used in York Region to provide recreation services for youth.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region has received a grant of \$70,000 from the Ministry of Health Promotion's Communities in Action Fund to support two sports projects for youth 13 to 18 years of age from June 2007 until March 2009.

3.1 The purpose of the Communities in Action Fund

The Communities in Action Fund:

- Provides opportunities for youth, 13 to 18 years of age, especially those of low income families and immigrant communities, to participate in sport and recreation activities.
- Supports the Province's ACTIVE 2010, a sport and recreation strategy designed to increase physical activity in Ontario.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Funding will support two projects

The Play It Forward and PLAY 2 programs, funded through the Communities in Action Fund, will give children of low income families in underserved social housing

communities in York Region the opportunity to participate in sport and recreation programming.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that children and youth who are involved in regular sport and recreational activities have increased self-confidence, higher self-esteem and an improved self-image, which contributes to strengthening children, families and communities.

4.1 Play It Forward

Play It Forward will be managed through a Purchase of Service Agreement by the YMCA of Greater Toronto. The Program will provide youth leadership and coaching training to youth age 13 to 18 residing in the identified housing communities. These youth will then organize various sports teams, leagues, and tournaments within their housing sites and near-by communities.

To identify the participating housing sites, Community Services and Housing staff conducted site visits and needs assessment meetings at Housing York Inc., non-profit and co-operative family housing communities across the Region. The identified housing sites which meet the provincial criteria for this pilot program are: Kin Village in the Town of Markham and Jubilee Gardens and John Fitzpatrick Steelworkers Co-operative in the Town of Richmond Hill.

This program is intended to encourage children and youth participation in physical activities in their communities, increase confidence and self-esteem, develop leadership skills as well as encourage team spirit and cooperation.

4.2 PLAY 2

PLAY 2 will be managed by local recreation departments through Purchase of Service Agreements with York Region. The Program will enable youth age 13 to 18 of low income families (receiving social assistance, residing in social housing with Rent-Geared-To-Income and/or recipients of child care fee assistance with income under the low-income-cut-off) to access local sport/recreation programs, the cost of which is currently a barrier for them.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

York Region will receive \$70,000 in project funding toward a total project budget of \$120,000 over two years. YMCA of Greater Toronto will deliver the Play It Forward Program and is contributing \$35,000 to the overall cost of \$120,000. York Region's share of this project, \$15,000, will be managed within the Department's approved budget.

Service providers will consider a sustainability plan to secure alternate sources of funding before the Communities in Action project funding ends in March 2009.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

This pilot project will increase service to targeted populations using an alternate source of revenue. York Region residents benefit from more opportunities for children and youth to participate in sport and recreation activities.

7. CONCLUSION

The Play It Forward and PLAY 2 programs, funded principally through the Communities in Action Fund, will provide children and youth of low income families, residing in underserved social housing communities in York Region, the opportunity to participate in sport and recreation programming.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.