

	Report Title	F.A.R.E. Program Update
	Report No.	RCP 19-21
	Author	Julie Dawley, Aquatics Supervisor
	Meeting Type	Council Meeting
	Council Date	May 13, 2019
	Attachments	

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives Report RCP 19-21 – F.A.R.E. Program Update for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Tillsonburg – Culture Parks and Recreation Department has provided a Recreation Fee Subsidy Program to Oxford County residents who are in financial need since 2014. The program originated through a grant of \$15,000 provided by the United Way. Since its inception the program has provided Recreation Fee Subsidy for 200 families (536 family members) and 62 individuals enhancing their access to recreation. Funding from United Way has since been reallocated to other Oxford County initiatives. F.A.R.E. needs a regular financial support stream to continue to assist those in need and RCP staff are continually implementing initiatives to secure funds for the program.

BACKGROUND

The F.A.R.E. Program (Fee Assisted Recreational Experiences) was implemented in 2014 with an initial grant from United Way Oxford. While there has been some change in the way the subsidy program has been provided since then, the program's three goals have been maintained and upheld consistently:

F.A.R.E. Goal # 1: Provide financial assistance in support of sport and recreational experiences for those in need.

F.A.R.E. Goal # 2: To ensure that the client's financial situation is kept confidential.

F.A.R.E. Goal # 3: To provide quality recreational experiences that make differences for everyone.

To be eligible for assistance, applicants must be:

- Residents of Oxford County; and
- Have a total household income below the Statistics Canada Low-Income Cutoff (LICO). Proof of financial status must be provided.

Both families and those living alone are eligible, and the program has no age restrictions.

In the current version of the program, once a family has been approved for the program each family member receives a Skate/Swim Indoor Pool and Lake Lisgar Waterpark Membership to attend any age appropriate swim and skate free of charge. In addition to this Membership, participants are enrolled in programs of their choice based on funding available through F.A.R.E. As dignity and privacy are paramount, the goal is to ensure participation remains confidential. Instructors in programs are unaware of payments for any participant ensuring equitable access for everyone.

Children have benefited from swimming lessons, specialized youth programming and bus trips. Adults have utilized swimming lessons, health club and bus trips.

Over the five years the program has been operating, funding for F.A.R.E. has been provided through:

- United Way Oxford
- Unclaimed & stale account credits from recreation programs and services
- Royal Bank
- Lioness Club
- Zehrs
- Good Redden & Klosler
- Unsolicited anonymous donations from members of the Community

These F.A.R.E. program donations were the result of fundraising activities, Corporate Initiatives and pure kindness of heart. RCP staff have also run fundraising events like Run the Runway and the Splash N Boots performance.

Community Outcomes

Statistics from the latest Tillsonburg Census report show a large number of people in the community who are in need of assistance:

- 745 Single Parents
- 2940 members of the community earn under \$20,000 per year
- 1975 earn less than \$10,000 per year
- 4885 are without any employment income

It has been proven that participating in recreation:

- Lowers the incidence of illness and obesity
- Provides psycho-social benefits that can foster life skills for success at school, work and home. It can reduce emotional problems and risky behavior; improve self-esteem, and create positive peer and family relationships.
- Can help break the cycle of poverty. Regular involvement by children and youth in structured, skill building recreational activities that develop self-esteem helps to build resilience and protect against the risks of low success in school and the labour market.
- Is a wise financial investment. In achieving the benefits described above, access to recreation results in savings in health, social service and justice costs. In addition, savings have been found in the tax system when people exit welfare and gain employment.

F.A.R.E. Stats 2014 – Present

Families	200 (536 family members)
Singles	62

Activities Included

Health Club Membership	138	Aerobics	13	Arena Rental	2
Birthday Party	1	Aqua Fit	46	Ultimate Sports	7
Community Swims	883	PA Day Programs	13	Karate	98
Gymnastics	2	Yoga	14	Summer Camp	77
Pool Rental	2	Skate	10	Dance	23
Waterpark Swims	614	Tennis	9	Bus Trips	173
Babysitting Course	9	March Break Camp	10	Swimming Lessons	229

FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

In order to support the future of F.A.R.E. ongoing financial support is essential. In addition to the existing funding sources listed above, RCP staff is proposing two new funding strategies designed to tap into community philanthropy. Acquiring support through the business sector of the municipality will create a beneficial relationship. There are 760 registered businesses in Tillsonburg and a campaign has been designed to communicate the importance of F.A.R.E. in the community. Even a small yearly donation from a portion of these businesses would put F.A.R.E. in a very healthy financial position to help those in the Community who need it most.

The second initiative involves inviting Town employees who have seen firsthand how F.A.R.E. is improving lives locally to provide some support. Similar to the United Way program, an employee payroll donation program could be implemented in answer to staff requests for ways to help support F.A.R.E. The Town of Tillsonburg has 216 employees and if a portion were to donate a small amount on each paycheck, a stable and consistent contribution could be made available each year to support eligible participants to join in a program of their choice.

As a starting point, it is suggested that a \$10,000 annual target for contributions from donations, fundraising events and corporate philanthropy towards this program be established.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (CSP) IMPACT

1. Excellence in Local Government
 - ☒ Demonstrate strong leadership in Town initiatives
 - ☐ Streamline communication and effectively collaborate within local government
 - ☒ Demonstrate accountability
2. Economic Sustainability
 - ☐ Support new and existing businesses and provide a variety of employment opportunities
 - ☐ Provide diverse retail services in the downtown core
 - ☐ Provide appropriate education and training opportunities in line with Tillsonburg's economy
3. Demographic Balance
 - ☒ Make Tillsonburg an attractive place to live for youth and young professionals
 - ☒ Provide opportunities for families to thrive
 - ☒ Support the aging population and an active senior citizenship
4. Culture and Community
 - ☒ Promote Tillsonburg as a unique and welcoming community
 - ☒ Provide a variety of leisure and cultural opportunities to suit all interests
 - ☒ Improve mobility and promote environmentally sustainable living

Report Approval Details

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Attachments:	
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Dave Rushton - May 7, 2019 - 10:33 AM



David Calder - May 7, 2019 - 11:03 AM

Donna Wilson - May 7, 2019 - 12:23 PM