

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – DECEMBER 6, 2011

RECREATION AND CULTURE - ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICE INITIATIVES

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommends:

1. That the following report on the various Recreation and Culture assistance programs and complimentary service initiatives available to citizens in the City of Vaughan be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact related to this report. Funding for the assistance programs and complimentary services are either funded through fundraised dollars, provided by external agencies, or built into the base operating budget for Recreation and Culture.

Communications Plan

The Recreation and Culture assistance programs and service initiatives, available to citizens in the City of Vaughan, will continue to be communicated through the recreation guide, city website, and through flyers and posters within community centres and other locations, as required.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the various assistance programs and complimentary service initiatives available to citizens in the City of Vaughan through the Recreation and Culture Department.

Background - Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan's Recreation and Culture Department is committed to providing quality recreational and cultural programs and services in an accessible, equitable and efficient manner so as to ensure that all Vaughan citizens have the opportunity to enhance their leisure and quality of life. This report provides information on several programs and services which contribute to the Department's vision of inclusive, progressive service delivery, including the following:

- (a) Fee Assistance Programs
- (b) Donations for Recreational Activities
- (c) Free and Discounted Programs
- (d) Service Initiatives
- (e) Free Admission to Public Events

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

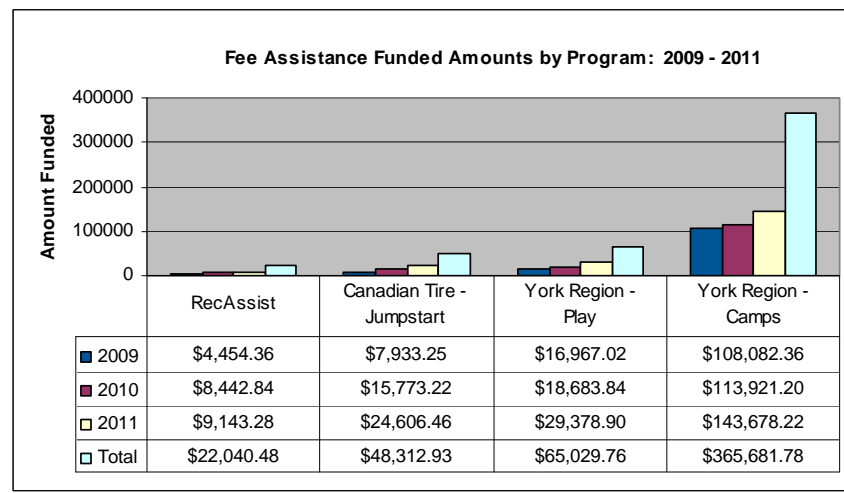
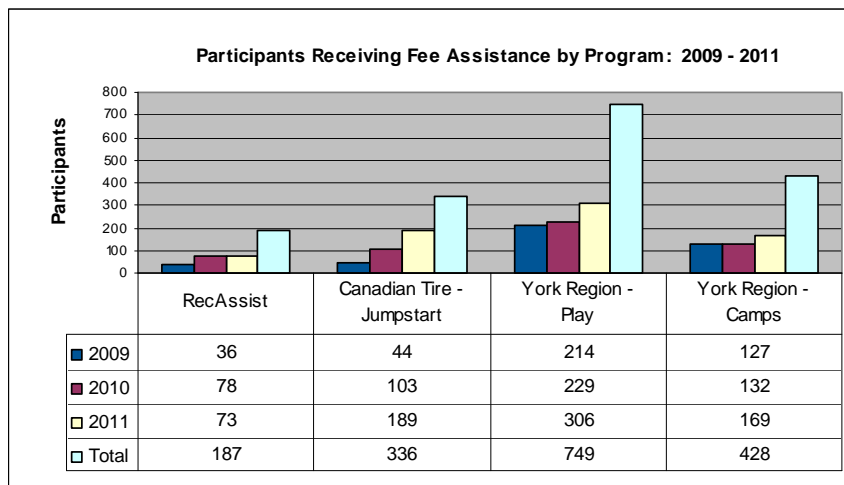
(a) Fee Assistance Programs

Synopsis

The Recreation and Culture Department administers three fee assistance programs which facilitate equal participation opportunities to low-income families. The three programs are:

1. City of Vaughan, Recreation and Culture Department – RecAssist
2. Canadian Tire – Jumpstart
3. York Region – Play Program and Camp Program

Through these programs, since 2009, a total of 1,700 participants have received \$498,767.73 of assistance for recreation programs. Recreation and Culture has directly raised over \$20,000, to be used for the RecAssist program. The remaining funds have been utilized in partnership with the Regional Municipality of York, and through the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program.



RecAssist

RecAssist is a fee assistance program that was established and approved by Vaughan Council in January 2009. RecAssist subsidizes the cost of Recreation and Culture programs for low income individuals and families in the City of Vaughan through fundraised dollars, and is administered by the Recreation and Culture Department. Since 2009, Recreation and Culture staff have raised approximately \$17,500 for RecAssist through various events such as Staff Talent Shows, Beach Volleyball, Celebrity Basketball, Hockey Tournaments and a Spinathon in 2011. Residents, via their expired credits, including local businesses and community service groups have donated approximately \$4,500 towards RecAssist. As of October 2011, 187 individuals and families have received fee assistance towards recreation programs. The demand for assistance with regards to program registration from the community is high; unfortunately, due to limited funds we are only able to assist a small number of individuals and families.

RecAssist Usage and Funded Amounts: 2009-2011

Year	Programs		Memberships		Total Participants	Total Funded Amount
	Number of Participants	Funded Amount	Number of Participants	Funded Amount		
2009	25	\$2,431.67	11	\$2,022.69	36	\$4,454.36
2010	44	\$4,342.66	34	\$4,100.18	78	\$8,442.84
2011*	53	\$5,810.34	20	\$3,332.94	73	\$9,143.28
Total	122	\$12,584.67	65	\$9,455.81	187	\$22,040.48

*2011 totals as of Oct 15, 2011.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart

Canadian Tire Jumpstart is a national charitable program that helps financially disadvantaged kids participate in organized sport and recreation by helping to cover registration costs. The Recreation and Culture Department administers the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program which has been another source of revenue when offering sports related programming to City of Vaughan citizens between the ages of 4 and 18.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart Usage and Funded Amounts: 2009-2011

Year	Programs		CSO		Total Participants	Total Funded Amount
	Number of Participants	Funded Amount	Number of Participants	Funded Amount		
2009	28	\$4,184.50	16	\$3,748.75	44	\$7,933.25
2010	78	\$10,101.95	25	\$5,671.27	103	\$15,773.22
2011*	167	\$19,179.21	22	\$5,427.25	189	\$24,606.46
Total	273	\$33,465.66	63	\$14,847.27	336	\$48,312.93

*2011 totals as of Oct 15, 2011.

York Region

In collaboration with the Regional Municipality of York, the Recreation and Culture Department has provided assistance to City of Vaughan citizens for recreational programming and camps. The children range in age from 4 to 12, and teenagers are between 13 and 18.

In 2011, York Region developed a new program whereby parents also received assistance.

Since 2009, York Region subsidies have totaled \$430,711.54.

York Region Usage and Funded Amounts: 2009-2011

Year	Play Program		Camps		Total Participants	Total Funded Amount
	Number of Participants	Funded Amount	Number of Participants	Funded Amount		
2009	214	\$16,967.02	127	\$108,082.36	341	\$125,049.38
2010	229	\$18,683.84	132	\$113,921.20	361	\$132,605.04
2011*	306	\$29,378.90	169	\$143,678.22	475	\$173,057.12
Total	749	\$65,029.76	428	\$365,681.78	1177	\$430,711.54

*2011 totals as of Oct 15, 2011.

(b) Donations for Recreational Activities

Complimentary Activity Pass Donations

Consistent with the Vaughan Vision 2020, the Recreation and Culture Department recognizes the importance of a healthy lifestyle and therefore provides opportunities for citizens and non-profit organizations in the City of Vaughan to receive complimentary passes through the Department's *Request for Donations* Program.

Since 2009, the semi-annual Recreation Guide has provided complimentary activity passes for residents to use toward activities such as recreational swims and skates, and toward access to one of the City's fitness centres.

Other avenues which have provided opportunities to win passes for free visits have included, but are not limited to:

- Complimentary swim and fitness passes awarded to participants and contest winners during Youth Week. May (annual)
- Complimentary swim passes awarded at park official openings (e.g. Twelve Oaks) Spring/Summer (annual)
- Complimentary skate passes awarded to City of Vaughan employees during the United Way Campaign. October (annual)
- Complimentary swim passes awarded at annual Vaughan Shines/WinterLights competition. November (annual)
- Complimentary skate passes awarded to participants at Take Your Kids to Work Day. November (annual)
- Complimentary fitness passes awarded during Financial Planning public forum. March 2010
- Complimentary swim, skate, sports, and fitness passes to program participants during monthly Customer Appreciation Draw September 2010 to March 2011
- 5-visit fitness centre voucher promotion for North Thornhill Fitness Centre. October 2011
- Complimentary swim or skate passes awarded to schools that participated in the City of Vaughan – Chum Christmas Wish Program – Toy Drive December 2010 and 2011
- Complimentary swim, skate, sport or fitness passes for not-for-profit organizations, i.e., school fundraising activities. As requested.

Complimentary passes have been redeemed by 3,852 participants since the start of 2009.

Pass Type	Brochure Passes	Complimentary Passes	Other Initiatives	Total Participants
	Number Redeemed	Number Redeemed	Number Redeemed	
Fitness	1300	289	13	1602
Swim/Skate	1402	244	397	2043
Sport	180	27	0	207
Total	2882	560	410	3852

Fitness Membership Donations

In addition to single visit complimentary passes, the Recreation and Culture Department has donated fitness memberships to non-profit Vaughan-based organizations. Further memberships have been awarded as prizes at City of Vaughan events, and during the Customer Appreciation draws.

In 2011, the Recreation and Culture Department initiated the Get Fit on Us contest. Via a lottery draw, a 1-year fitness membership was awarded at the City of Vaughan Canada Day celebration, and ten 3-month fitness memberships were awarded at the Concerts in the Park (two prizes per ward).

A total of 171 fitness memberships have been awarded since the start of 2009.

Year	1-Month Memberships	3-Month Memberships	Total Participants
	Number of Participants	Number of Participants	
2009	0	63	63
2010	57	11	68
2011	20	20	40
Total	77	94	171

Miscellaneous Donations

Other prizes in the Customer Appreciation Draw included three gift certificates for recreation programs or memberships, and three Active Together gift packs.

(c) Free and Discounted Programs

Early Years Development Centres

Early Years Development Centres are free programs offered in partnership with select governing bodies. Sessions occur on a weekly schedule. The programs offered are:

- The Lunch Bunch at Maple Community Centre (early years parenting program) – parents drop in with their children for fun activities while they enjoy coffee, speakers and parenting resources. This program is in partnership with York Region.
- Mother Goose Program at Maple Community Centre – an interactive, informative program for parent and baby, up to 14 months of age. This group experience focuses on the pleasure and power of using rhymes, songs and stories. This program is in partnership with York Region.

- Satellite Ontario Early Years Program at Dufferin Clark and North Thornhill Community Centres – early learning opportunities for children, newborn to 6 years old and their parents. This program is in partnership with the Thornhill Ontario Early Years Centre.

Recreational Activities

The Recreation and Culture Department provides regularly-scheduled opportunities for patrons to use the community centre facilities for free, or at reduced cost. These activities include:

- Once-per-month free guest days at each City of Vaughan operated fitness centre.
- Half-price recreational swims for children and youth under 18 years of age at select locations and times.
- Free use of outdoor ice pads located at Chancellor, Dufferin Clark, Father E. Bulfon, Garnet A. Williams, and Vellore Village community centres during supervised recreational skates.
- Free use of mini-mini soccer fields and t-ball diamonds.
- Free use of space for Older Adult clubs.
- Youth drop-in activities for a \$15 annual membership fee. The membership includes access to all drop-in youth recreational sports programs, and use of the youth rooms (billiards, ping pong, foosball).
- Drop-in program allowing participants 16 years of age or older with physical disabilities to socialize and enjoy recreation activities at Father E. Bulfon Community Centre.

During scheduled school breaks, the Recreation and Culture Department may adopt a holiday schedule of recreational activities. Activities offered during holidays, at no charge to the public, include:

- Holiday Break – Tim Horton's sponsored free recreational skate at Al Palladini, Garnet A. Williams, and Maple arenas.
- Free Family Day Activities - drop-in arts programs, fitness classes, family squash, recreational sports, Tim Hortons sponsored free recreational skate.
- March Break - Tim Hortons sponsored recreational swim at Al Palladini, Chancellor, Dufferin Clark, Father E. Bulfon, Garnet A. Williams, Maple, North Thornhill, and Vellore Village pools.

The Recreation and Culture Department runs additional programs through its Active Together plan, and through Community Development programs. Some examples of these programs are:

- Youth Week – free activities for youth; youth room activities and recreational sports, tournaments and competitions, fitness classes, youth swims.
- National Access Awareness Week – free activities for participants with exceptionalities; recreational swimming and sports, roller blading, fitness classes, arts programs. Programs run in partnership with the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC).
- June/Recreation and Parks Month – free activities every day, including fitness classes, badminton, sports contests, water polo, aquafitness; outdoor activities include Conservation Walk at Boyd Park, geocaching, Nordic pole walking.
- Drop-in School Professional Development Day Programs at various community centres.

SERVICE INITIATIVES

(d) Service Initiatives

The following service-based initiatives offered by the Recreation and Culture Department promote diversity, innovation, and opportunity for participants:

- Language Line Services – a free translation service at all community centres and City Hall.
- Services-in-Kind through our Fairs and Festivals Support Program.
- Babysitting services for fitness centre members at Al Palladini, Garnet A. Williams, Maple, and North Thornhill community centres.
- Unsupervised free recreational skates at outdoor skate pads, and free lunch-time recreational skates at indoor skating facilities.
- Cooling Centres – splash pads and water parks.

(e) Free Admission to Public Events

The Recreation and Culture Department coordinates numerous events yearly. Public admission is free of charge:

Event	Description	Projected Attendance
Concerts in the Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five, one per Ward, outdoor summer concerts at Vaughan parks featuring tribute performers and local artists.	3,500
Canada Day Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free entertainment at Mackenzie Glen District Park; featuring headline concerts, stage performances, family barbecue, pizza-making workshop, Kidz Zone with inflatables, face painting and more.	6,000 – 8,000
Winterfest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free entertainment at a Vaughan community centre; featuring outdoor stage performances and special guests, family barbecue, Midway Kidz Zone, horse-drawn wagon rides, arts and crafts, displays and more.	5,000 – 7,000
Culture Days/ Doors Open Vaughan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free cultural activities, hands-on demonstrations and interactive activities offered by cultural groups, organizations and individual artists from Vaughan. Exhibits and performances at the City Playhouse Theatre and other venues in Vaughan. Open house, with guided tours, for Vaughan landmarks selected for their historical, architectural, cultural and/or environmental significance.	2,200

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence- Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery
- GOAL OBJECTIVE :
Promote Community Safety, Health and Wellness

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

There are no regional implications.

Conclusion

The Recreation and Culture Department programs and initiatives supports the City of Vaughan's vision of being a City of choice that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable. The various programs and service initiatives provides assistance to all citizens in the City of Vaughan.

Attachments

None

Report Prepared By

Mary Reali, Director of Recreation and Culture, ext. 8234
Viviana Precopi, Planning and Office Services Supervisor, ext. 8319
Cary Guglielmi, Senior Technical Clerk, ext. 8423

Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services