

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - NOVEMBER 15, 2011

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES- DECEMBER 3, 2011

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee, recommends:

1. That December 3, 2011 be proclaimed International Day of Persons with Disabilities in the City of Vaughan; and,
2. That Meenu Sikand, Chair of the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee, make a presentation at the Council meeting of November 29, 2011.

Contribution to Sustainability

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

- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of culture and its heritage.

Economic Impact

Costs associated with the promotion and delivery of this presentation will be covered by the 2011 Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee budget.

Communications Plan

The City of Vaughan in cooperation with the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) will communicate the observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities December 3, 2011 date through the City's website.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities December 3, 2011 date as proclaimed by the United Nations and present an outline of the programs and initiatives supported by the City of Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

People with disabilities represent 10 per cent of the world's population. *"Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development"* is the international theme celebrated in 2011 by the United Nations. The purpose of the annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is to promote an understanding of disability issues, to increase awareness of the benefits to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities into every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

The barriers persons with disabilities face are more prevalent as a result of the environment in which they live in rather than their impairment. Obstacles to participation in society grows more from the environment in which people live and not within the individual's perception of their abilities. These barriers can be prevented, reduced or eliminated.

The City of Vaughan plays a significant role in ensuring access to programs for people with disabilities living in our community and through the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC). VAAC's role is to make recommendations to Council on the preparation and implementation of the annual Accessibility Plan; to advise council on the planning and accessibility of municipal buildings and services; and to address and identify the needs of the community by the removal and prevention of barriers in the City of Vaughan's by-laws, policies, program and practices. The inclusivity of citizens with disabilities is a corporate-wide vision shared by Council and staff and identified in Vaughan's corporate strategic plan.

In conjunction with the Chair of the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee, a PowerPoint presentation will be presented to Council at the November 29, 2011 Council meeting that will outline the significance of celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The presentation will conclude with a song by participants from Vaughan's recreational programs.

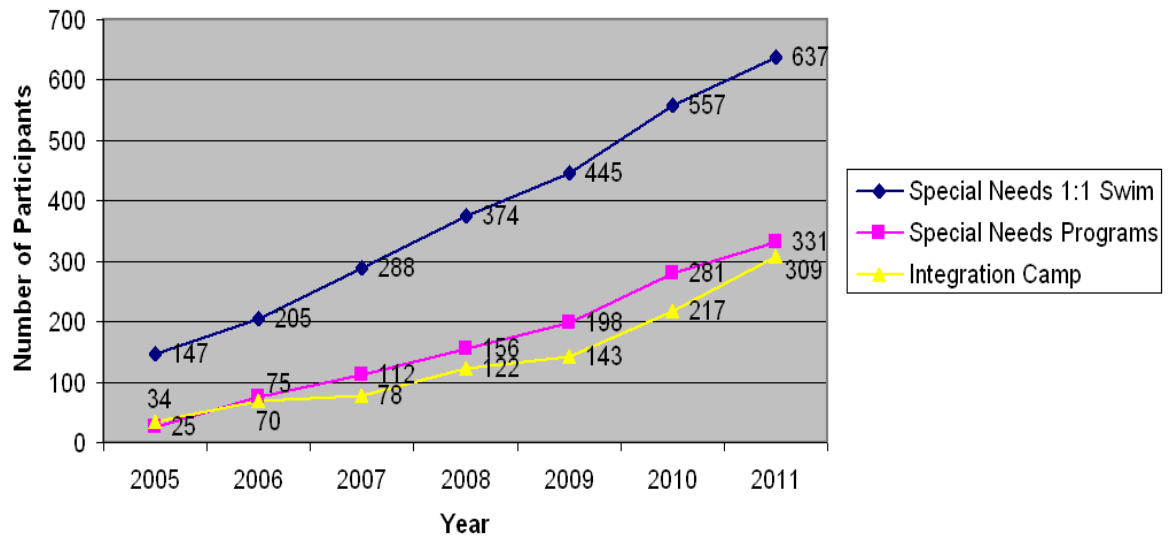
In the last several years there have been a number of initiatives by the City of Vaughan as it relates to accessibility including the following:

- Accessibility Plan updated and approved by Council in 2010,
- Filed compliance report with the Ministry of community and Social Services for the Accessibility for Customer Service Regulation, On. Reg. 429/ 07,
- Raised awareness through public events and activities during the yearly celebrations of the National Access Awareness Week and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities,
- Addressed accessibility issues through public consultation meeting "Improving our services with you"; in partnership with YRT Mobility Plus,
- Completed the installation of the TEXTNET in Access Vaughan to assist callers with cognitive and hearing impairments.
- Provide public information and education as it relates to accessibility during Canada Day and Winterfest;
- Vaughan Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Training for all staff by the Human Resources Department,
- Organized "Transition Fair" in collaboration York Support Services Network.
- Purchased assistive devices: FM William System, UbiDuo, Trail Rider and Moto Med for the community's use.
- Established a staff Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to deal with accessibility standards regulations.
- Retrofitted the information desks at Al Palladini, Maple, and Garnet A. Williams Community Centres to improve accessibility.

The Recreation and Culture Department provides a number of programs and services for people with disabilities and regularly identifies and creates new opportunities to reflect the diverse and growing program needs of the community. Recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities are vast and include the creative arts, health and wellness, life and social skills, performing arts, sports and leadership programs.

The following chart identifies the growth in the participation within City of Vaughan special needs programs and increase in programs and services realized in the past 7 years:

Participation in Special Needs Programs 2005-2011



Recreation and Culture staff continue to work with community partners in order to address service and program gaps. These partners include: Alternatives, Community Living York South, Early Intervention Services, Children's Treatment Network, META Centre, MS Society, Kinark, Kerry's Place, VITA Community Living Services, York Support Services Network and ParaSport Ontario. Further, the department continues to conduct awareness-raising and educational initiatives for the public and specific groups of professionals, and continues to implement a system of community services and support for persons with disabilities.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

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

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery;
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:
Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness- To deliver high quality services and promote health and wellness through program development and increased awareness.

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 inclusivity of persons with disabilities is a matter of human rights and an essential investment in the future of our society. A testament to the City of Vaughan's work and achievements for our special needs community is defined by the increase in special needs programs, the increased participation of children, youth and adults with special needs in recreation programs, the purchase of assistive devices by the City, the funding support for low income residents with special needs

though the Vaughan RecAssist program and the increased number of partnerships with community organizations servicing Vaughan's special needs community within the City's recreation centres. Importantly, Vaughan's Accessibility Plan outlines corporate and departmental objectives related to addressing accessibility issues and services.

Attachments

N/A

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Respectfully submitted,

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