

Clause 18 in Report No. 12 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on September 21, 2017.

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Update on After-School Pilot Programs at Social Housing Sites and Request for Program Continuation

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated August 10, 2017 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. It is recommended that Council authorize:
 - a. the continuation of After-School programs at four social housing sites for children and youth between 7-17 years of age, upon completion of the current pilot project which ends in December 2017;
 - b. the expansion of After-School programs at the four social housing sites to include school breaks, Professional Development days and summer programming, up to seven hours per day, starting in 2018; and
 - c. the expansion of the After-School programs from four social housing sites to six social housing sites, beginning in 2019, subject to budget approval. The location of the programs will be determined using an evaluative profile process with the Housing Branch.
 2. It is recommended that the Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute the required agreements within the approved annual budgets and outlooks.
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Report dated August 10, 2017 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services now follows:

1. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Council authorize:
 - a) the continuation of After-School programs at four social housing sites for children and youth between 7-17 years of age, upon completion of the current pilot project which ends in December 2017;

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- b) the expansion of After-School programs at the four social housing sites to include school breaks, Professional Development days and summer programming, up to seven hours per day, starting in 2018; and
 - c) the expansion of the After-School programs from four social housing sites to six social housing sites, beginning in 2019, subject to budget approval. The location of the programs will be determined using an evaluative profile process with the Housing Branch.
2. It is recommended that the Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute the required agreements within the approved annual budgets and outlooks.

2. Purpose

This report provides an update on the After-School pilot program operating at four social housing sites from January 2016 to December 2017. It also recommends continuation of the program at the four pilot sites, and expansion of the program to include, school breaks, Professional Development days and summer programming. In addition the expansion of the After-School program to two more social housing sites in 2019 is recommended. The locations of the two additional social housing sites will be determined using an evaluation profile, as was done for the four pilot locations.

3. Background and Previous Council Direction

At its meeting of March 26, 2015, Council approved development and implementation of a two-year pilot program to provide free after-school programs at four social housing sites: [After School Programs in York Region Social Housing](#). The pilot ends December 2017. An extension is being requested at this time to ensure there is no break in service because of the time needed for the Request for Proposal process.

The After-School pilot program is a joint initiative between the Social Services and Housing Services branches aimed at addressing the complex needs of children and youth in social housing with the goal of supporting their success in school and development of life skills.

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Evidence based research supports the benefits of After-School programs for children and youth

As noted in the March 2015 report, families with children in social housing face many barriers to accessing program supports outside of their communities, such as fees, transportation, social isolation, and complex family situations or mental health issues. Services on site help to overcome these barriers and decrease youth loitering, police calls and concerns from residents that “kids have nothing to do”. In addition, with many parents working long hours, training or looking for work, unsupervised children and youth have no homework assistance which results in poor educational achievement. This is also a concern from the perspective of the social determinants of health because poor educational achievement increases the risk of future low income.

The RBC (Royal Bank of Canada) Foundation After-School Programs evaluation literature review completed by the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto (March 2013), cites evidence that unsupervised time among youth leads to poor outcomes. In disadvantaged communities, when children and youth have nothing to do in the hours after school, they often develop low self-esteem, less resilience, have few positive role models, have poor school achievement and a continuum of generational poverty is perpetuated.

With this in mind, York Region piloted After-School programs at social housing sites, which are designed to meet unique community needs, increase access for vulnerable children and youth and to provide an environment that results in children and youth getting the support they need to do well and reach their potential.

Four sites were selected using an evaluation profile and a service provider was selected through a competitive process
Council approved implementation of four After-School pilot programs in three local municipalities. An evaluation profile was developed by Social Services and Housing Services to select sites that considered:

- Community isolation
- Number of children and youth
- Community safety
- Identified program gaps (children and youth hanging around resulting in increased instances of vandalism and negative social issues)
- Available appropriate community space

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- Willingness to work in partnership (Property manager, tenants to develop program that is responsible to community needs)

The following four sites were selected in those municipalities:

1. Richmond Hill Co-op (Richmond Hill)
2. Kinsmen Village and Trinity Square (Markham)
3. Brayfield Manor (Newmarket)
4. Mulock Village (Newmarket)

Social Services staff, in conjunction with Supplies and Services, issued a Request for Proposal inviting community agencies with expertise in program delivery and mental health supports for vulnerable children and youth to deliver the programs on-site. 360°kids was awarded the contract and currently operates the After-School programs.

360°kids held a series of meetings to gain insight into these communities from December 1-18, 2015. These events reached 170 residents and children at the four sites and allowed 360°kids to hear from residents about what they needed the After-School programs to offer.

Given that each community was demographically different, it was determined that program structure would need to be flexible and adaptable if it was to be successful. The residents, children and youth wanted to have separate program days based on age (7-12 years) and (13-17 years). Through community conversations and consultation 360°kids branded the program “YOUthrive”. This collaborative community partnership then led to the creation of the framework for the program.

4. Analysis and Implications

Almost 250 children and youth attended the After-School programs

In 2016, 118 children and 129 youth attended the After-School programs. The programs operated Monday to Friday with the times and days varying among sites as programs were tailored to each community’s unique needs. Programs were based on the interests and needs of the children, youth and families in each social housing community. Activities included:

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Children (7-12 years of age):

1. Homework Support
2. Cooking/Nutrition Skills
3. Active and Co-operative Games
4. Life Skill Development

Youth (13-17 years of age):

1. Homework Support
2. Healthy, Active Living and Life Skills
3. Leadership Opportunities/Engagement in Community Programs
4. Mental Health Supports
5. Pre-employment Skills

Program enrollment has been strong in 2017

Each program offers inclusive and enriched recreational programming for cooperative housing residents to support their social, emotional, physical and mental health needs. Each program also aims to increase life skills among children and youth and connect them and their families to community supports and information in order to help them to help themselves break the cycle of poverty. So far from January to March 2017, 143 children and youth have attended a program.

More detailed information on programming and numbers served is provided in the attachment to this report.

After-School programs in the social housing pilot have enhanced the lives of the children and youth who participated

After-School Programs at social housing sites provide the children and youth with opportunities to learn and improve in an environment of respect and acceptance. Ongoing reviews of the program ensure activities as well as tangible outcomes

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are measured and evaluated. Children and youth attending the After-School programs were surveyed and results are set out in Table 1.

Table 1
After-School Programs in Social Housing 2016
Who is better off?

Program Measure (2016)	% of 247 Children and Youth
Percentage of participants who report trying/learning/improving a skill	93%
Percentage of participants who report a positive life change	86%
Percentage of participants who report an increase in homework supports	81%
Percentage of participants who feel welcome, respected and accepted	88%
Percentage of participants that are aware of more services available in their communities and are able to help themselves proactively	86%

Youth have become engaged, developed action plans, skills, and achieved goals to support their future success

Although teenagers can sometimes be the most difficult residents to engage, participation has been excellent as demonstrated by the numbers participating in various program offerings:

- 129 youth participated in general programs
- 60 youth attended Camp Robin Hood on Professional Development day
- 30 youth attended a Raptors 905 Basketball game
- 8 youth attended overnight summer camp
- 1 youth attended leader in training camp
- 28 youth obtained summer employment in the summer of 2016

In the After-School programs youth set aspirations and future goals. Throughout the year each participant develops an action plan to establish steps to achieve their goals. In the 13 to 17 year-old program many of the youth goals are focussed on the requirements for secondary and post-secondary education. 360°kids provides guidance with arrangement for community service hour

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opportunities, school attendance accountability, school selection for post-secondary education, and Ontario Student Assistance Program applications. Youth testimonials confirm that the After-School program provided them the guidance required to take the necessary steps to successfully apply for and gain acceptance into post-secondary education. A total of 13 youth were supported to complete their community volunteer hours so they could be eligible to graduate from high school. In September 2016, two youth began post-secondary education and received supporting scholarships. Three youth plan to attend post-secondary institutions in September 2017.

One site has been successful in engaging the children in their local recreation programs, outside of their housing community. This has allowed them to experience a variety of recreational programs and establish friendships outside of school time they might not otherwise have made. The programs pair the younger children with the older children to do things together such as make snacks for the program. This has allowed the children in the community to come together and build social life skills that assist them in everyday life.

After-School pilot programs have contributed to an increased sense of community and a decreased York Regional Police presence

Relationships in the community have improved as a result of the After-School programs. For example, in one of the social housing sites, food was recognized as a motivating factor for creating community connections. Staff and youth in the program design two different food calendars each month, featuring dinner and lunch menus. The lunch menu allows children and youth to leave the program with a packed lunch to take to school or work the next day. This program is very popular and has brought the community together and allowed youth to earn some volunteer hours preparing food and delivering it to those who cannot attend sessions due to work or school demands. It has created an environment of family within the community as both groups take care of each other.

This community feeling has extended beyond the youth as the Property Manager has reported an 80% decrease in tenant to tenant complaints and a decreased need for York Regional Police presence in the community.

At another site tensions between residents were causing parents to deny children and youth the opportunity to participate in programs. 360°kids began community outreach and clarified that the purpose of the program is to build social skills, support education and connections. This encouraged residents to see beyond their differences and allow all children to attend. This led to parents also requesting programming for themselves. 360°kids has collaborated with the

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Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to design a program to meet the community needs. 360°kids staff are currently cross training CMHA on YOUthrive activities so that they understand the culture of the program and can develop appropriate programming for the parents.

Developing potential is a continuous process and the need to influence positive life changes exists in the summer months

Parents and program staff have noted that the summer break has resulted in less structure for children and youth. They also note challenges with Professional Development days as the children and youth are left alone all day. Therefore, this report recommends continuing and expanding the After-School program at the existing four sites and the two new sites to also cover off school breaks, Professional Development days and summer programming. Continuation of the programs will support momentum and ongoing engagement, and ensure no break in the progress being made.

An incremental approach to expansion beyond four sites is recommended

There are sites in other parts of the Region that could benefit greatly from an After-School Program. As in the initial design, additional sites would be chosen through a joint evaluation process involving staff from Social Services and Housing Services, using the criteria previously decided upon, to identify potential additional sites for 2019.

If approved, the program will be expanded incrementally, beginning with implementation of year-round programming at the four current sites starting January 2018 followed by the addition of the two additional sites January 2019 subject to budget approval. The two additional sites will take longer to implement. Each site will require community consultation, development of customized programming, staff training, determination of program and equipment needs, and development of a work plan to the satisfaction of Community and Health Services staff to support sustainable success. A Request for Proposal will determine what agency provides After-School programming and a review of the program locations conducted every 5 years in conjunction with the purchasing by-laws. Any additional sites will be subject to approval though the budget process.

After-School programs in social housing supports the Region's 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan

The After-School program supports the priority area of Supporting Community Health and Well-being, specifically contributing to the "Strengthening of the

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Region's network of human services to support people in achieving their potential".

5. Financial Considerations

This report contains a pre-budget request for 2018 funding to ensure no interruption of the current After School program and to permit sufficient time to implement the addition of service on school breaks. Funding for the 2019 addition of two sites will be requested through the 2019 budget process.

The After-School programs in social housing are 100% Regional tax levy supported with a current budget of \$187,875 (Gross/Net). This funds program delivery costs including staffing, materials and equipment. This cost, which amounts to less than \$5 per day/per participant, is included in the existing Community and Health Services Budget. Adding school break, Professional Development days to the summer programming, would require an increase of \$79,701 bringing the total (2018) cost to \$267,576 or less than \$5 per day/per participant.

Table 2
After-School Programs in Social Housing
Funding Allocations

	2017	2018	2019	Change
Current Program (4 sites)	\$187,875			
Current Program (4 sites) plus all school breaks		\$267,576		\$79,701
6 sites (Additional 2 sites, 4 sites current plus all school breaks subject to 2019 budget process)			\$401,364	\$133,788
Total	\$187,875	\$267,576	\$401,364	\$213,489

6. Local Municipal Impact

After-School Programs at social housing sites are designed to support children and youth obtain academic and social skills and ultimately to help break the cycle of poverty and support participants in their journey to become future adult contributors to our communities and economies. Children and youth at four

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Housing York buildings in Richmond Hill, Markham and Newmarket, have benefitted from the After-School programs in social housing. Tangible academic and community success are being achieved and will continue should the recommendations to continue and expand the After-School program be approved.

7. Conclusion

The After-School program pilot in social housing has resulted in positive outcomes for children and youth. The decrease in youth loitering and police calls as well as the increase in youth completing high school and attending post-secondary education speaks to the importance of continuing to provide these programs. These programs, which cost an average of \$4.62 per participant/per day, are an investment that promotes positive self-esteem, skill development, healthy lifestyles and leadership opportunities. Continuing this model of proactive community development will promote stronger and more resilient York Region families and communities at the social housing sites participating in the pilot.

For more information on this report, please contact Cordelia Abankwa, General Manager, Social Services at 1-877-464-9675 Extension 72150.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

August 10, 2017

Attachment (1)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

After School Programs in Social Housing Sites – 2016

Site Name	Number of Children	Specific Programs	Program Days and Hours
Brayfield Manor	Ages 7-12 = 29 Ages 13-17= 42 Total = 71	Recreational focus for Children and youth. Focus on Life skills, time management and school attendance for the youth. Incentive programs developed to support school attendance and the completion of school assignments for the Youth.	Ages 13-17 Mon, Wed and Thursday. Ages 7-12 Tuesday and Friday.
Landsberg Lewis	Ages 7-12 = 22 Ages 13-17= 31 Total = 53	Children – Focus is on Social Inclusion, Diversity, Acceptance and recreation. Youth – Outreach program that includes program focus on employment and support with court dates. The youth require transportation passes for employment and court attendance.	Ages 13-17 Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Ages 7-12 Mon and Wed
Kinsman /Trinity Square	Ages 7-12=30 Ages 13-17=37 Total = 67	Youth – Employment supports, Resume building, Individual and family counselling services, Life Skills, nutritional supports and Gang prevention. Probation worker attends the program to work with the Youth.	Ages 13-17 Mon, Wed and Friday Ages 7-12 Tuesday and Thursday
Mulock Village	Ages 7-12=37 Ages 13-17=19 Total = 56	Food Security is the focus for the Children and youth. The program offers a hearty dinner where the children and youth prepare the meal and make enough for the following day's lunch. The Youth and families require specific help with planning for Post-Secondary school. The application process, applying for financial support and preparing for transition to the College or University.	Ages 13-17 Mon, Tues and Thurs. Ages 7-12 Wed and Friday

The four programs offer after school programs for children ages 7 – 17, Monday to Friday