

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY and PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON JULY 19, 2016
FROM:	LYNNE LIVINGSTONE MANAGING DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN AND FIRE SERVICES
SUBJECT:	COMPASSIONATE CITIES INITIATIVE UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services, the report providing an update on the London Compassionate Cities initiative **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Verbal Presentation and Communication from J. A. Nordemann, Founder, Canadians for Compassion to the Community and Neighbourhoods Committee (CNC), December 14, 2010.
- Community and Protective Services Committee, May 3, 2011 – Compassionate Cities Report

BACKGROUND

On May 9th, 2011 Council of the City of London voted unanimously to affirm and adopt the principles set out in the Charter for Compassion and declare London a Compassionate City. The vote was the culmination of over a year and half of discussions with former mayor Anne Marie DeCicco-Best and was supported by Jannet Ann Leggett (formerly Jannet Ann Nordemann), who was the founder of the organization Canadians for Compassion. With the support of Ms. Leggett, London became the first community in Canada to affirm the Charter and the declaration highlighted a number of compassionate initiatives that were already underway in London, such as the creation of an inter-faith council and the creation of a compassion mobile application or “app”. Unfortunately, Canadians for Compassion was unable to obtain charitable status and the organization became defunct in December 2014. However, individual communities in Canada, including London, have continued to pursue their own compassionate initiatives.

The Compassionate Cities initiative contributes to Council’s strategic area of focus of Strengthening Our Community by working to always be a compassionate city for all and supporting caring and compassionate services. London has advanced the implementation of caring and compassionate city services through a number of projects. These accomplishments are summarized in the proposed community profile update to be added to the Charter for Compassion International website (Appendix A).

The Charter for Compassion International Organization

The Charter for Compassion is a non-profit organization that was inspired by the Charter for Compassion, created by Karen Armstrong and the Council of Conscience in 2009. Charter for Compassion International provides a network for people to engage in creating compassionate communities worldwide. Charter for Compassion International offers a Charter Toolbox as a resource for communities to start conversations about compassion and develop plans. In addition, organizations can apply to be a partner of Charter for Compassion International and in doing so become a signatory of the Charter.

London's community profile on the Charter for Compassion International website has not been updated since London declared itself a Compassionate City in 2011. Since that time, London has continued to make advancements in the implementation of compassionate city services. In addition, a number of community-led activities have independently contributed to London's development as a compassionate city. Please see Appendix A for details. In order to maintain the momentum of this initiative and to encourage new activities, it is necessary to update London's profile with the Charter for Compassion International, highlight our accomplishments on the City of London website, and connect community partners with the Compassionate Cities movement. City staff will reach out to local community organizations engaged in compassionate activities (e.g. LUSO Community Services, Compassion Canada, the Multi-Faith Social Action Coalition of London, etc.) and encourage these groups to become partners of Charter for Compassion International at www.charterforcompassion.org and start their own compassionate conversations using the Charter for Compassion Toolkit. This will improve awareness of the Charter for Compassion and will encourage individuals and organizations to advance, share, and celebrate compassion in our community.

Next Steps

The City of London has continued to display a commitment to providing compassionate city services since affirming the Charter in 2011. In addition, numerous local initiatives, led by both individuals and organizations, have demonstrated continued interest in fostering kindness and compassion in our city. In the absence of a national organization for compassionate communities, London has the opportunity to demonstrate our leadership in compassion through the following actions:

- Update our community profile on the Charter for Compassion International website to highlight what has been accomplished since 2011.
- Celebrate our compassionate activities and share them on the City of London website.
- Encourage the community (community organizations, charities, faith groups, etc.) to become partners of the Charter for Compassion International and start their own compassionate activities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no costs associated with London's continued participation in the Compassionate Cities initiative. The City of London is committed to providing caring and compassionate services and this is accomplished within existing operating budgets. Individual organizations can become partners of the Charter for Compassion for free, and all of the Charter tools and resources are available for use free of charge.

CONCLUSION

The City of London has developed and implemented caring and compassionate city services since affirming the Charter for Compassion in 2011. By sharing updated information about accomplishments and encouraging organizations to join the Compassionate Cities movement, London will continue to advance our Compassionate Cities initiative.

PREPARED BY:	SUBMITTED BY:
MICHELLE DELLAMORA SUPERVISOR, AGE FRIENDLY LONDON NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN, AND FIRE SERVICES	PAUL D'HOLLANDER MANAGER, AREA SERVICES NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN, AND FIRE SERVICES
	RECOMMENDED BY:
	LYNNE LIVINGSTONE, MANAGING DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN & FIRE SERVICES

APPENDIX A

Charter for Compassion International Updated Community Profile for London, Ontario

On May 9th, 2011 the full council of the City of London voted unanimously to affirm and adopt the principles set out in the Charter for Compassion and declare London a Compassionate City. The vote was the culmination of more than a year and half of discussions with former mayor Anne Marie DeCicco-Best, who expressed support of London becoming a Compassionate City when invited to participate in an inaugural city affirming event on November 19, 2009. Since 2011, a number of City of London and community initiatives have furthered our goal of working to always be a Compassionate City for all. This was identified as a strategy in the City of London Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2019 and supports efforts to promote our community as diverse, inclusive, and welcoming.

Below is a list of City of London key accomplishments in 2015 that support and promote compassion in our community.

- Helped those in need get access to recreation programming- Provided \$775,000 through the Play Your Way fund to low income residents to participate in Spectrum programs.
- Distributed approximately 80 free signs to businesses and property owners as part of the new Accessible Sign Campaign, to encourage adding more accessible parking spaces.
- Improved accessible parking space and signage in parks, arenas and community centres and installed Age Friendly benches in key locations.
- Launched New Pet Fostering Program – Program supports rescuing and fostering of over 300 dogs and 500 cats in 2015.
- Supported seniors in long term care by initiating a strategic planning and formal accreditation process to support service delivery for seniors at Dearness Home – to be completed by mid-2016
- Protected our environment by reaching a milestone goal of total reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (6% below 1990 levels)
- Supported compassionate and accessible social services through the continued implementation of the “Community Based Service Delivery Model” / Social Services Community Service initiative – August 2015 opening of Social Services office at South London Community Centre
- Launched the Mayor’s Advisory Panel on Poverty, which developed recommendations on what more we can do to address poverty in London. For more information and to view the report, please see: <http://www.london.ca/city-hall/mayors-office/Pages/Mayor-Advisory-Panel-on-Poverty.aspx>

Other community-led initiatives that contribute to London being a Compassionate City:

- PovertyOVER Action Campaign led by the London Child & Youth Network (CYN). Building on the Mayor’s Advisory Panel on Poverty report, with the goal of ending poverty in London in one generation, the campaign offers tools and information to think differently about poverty and act to end it. For more information, visit www.ifyouknew.ca
- Anti-Ageism Workshops, developed by the Respect & Social Inclusion Working Group of the Age Friendly London Network, educate people of all ages on how to identify ageist language, attitudes, and behaviours and how to be an advocate for older persons. The workshop is being presented in the community for people of all ages and in local high schools.
- London “Snow Angels” initiative matches people who need help shovelling snow on their driveway or property with “Snow Angel” volunteers in their neighbourhood who will shovel snow for them. For more information, visit <http://snowangelslondon.ca/>

- LUSO Community Services 1,000 Acts of Kindness campaign has continued. The 2015 campaign delivered over 3,000 donated items to locations across the city that do kindness all year round. The campaign organized a “Ripple Bus of Kindness” departed from LUSO and made 5 stops: My Sister’s Place Women’s Support Centre; Ark Aid Street Mission; Women’s Community House; The South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre; and Canadian Blood Services. Plans are currently underway for the 2016 campaign in October. For more information about the 1,000 Acts of Kindness Campaign, visit: <http://1000acts.ca/>
- Community efforts to welcome Syrian refugees. More than 800 government-assisted Syrian refugees are expected to arrive in London by the end of February 2016. Individuals and organizations have banded together to support incoming refugees, with efforts being led by the City of London Social Services and the London Cross Cultural Learning Centre, the City’s lead resettlement agency.
- The United Way of London Middlesex has been providing assistance and recently started a fundraising drive for Syrian refugees. The London Free Press reports that Londoners donated more than \$400,000 to a fund set up to help receive and welcome Syrians. Other agencies involved in efforts to sponsor and support incoming refugees include the London Muslim Mosque, North Park Community Church, Byron United Church, and other faith organizations, as well as London’s Muslim and business communities and volunteers from many different sectors.
London Free Press Article: <http://www.lfpress.com/2016/01/04/more-than-800-government-assisted-syrian-refugees-expected-to-arrive-in-london-by-the-end-of-february>
- “Kindness Meters” – London community advocate Lincoln McCardle brought the idea of installing “kindness meters” to London City Council after he and his wife saw one in Ottawa’s Byward market. A “kindness meter” is a decommissioned parking meter that has been repurposed to collect change that is then donated to local charities.
London Free Press Article: <http://www.lfpress.com/2015/11/26/can-you-spare-a-little-change--for-the-meter-and-the-needy>
For more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/KindnessMetersLdn>