

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE May 24, 2017
FROM:	LYNNE LIVINGSTONE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN & FIRE SERVICES
SUBJECT:	HEALTHY KIDS COMMUNITY CHALLENGE UPDATE

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director of Neighbourhood, Children & Fire Services, this update report on the status of the provincially funded Healthy Kids Community Challenge program **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Healthy Kids Community Challenge Project Funding Agreement – Template – CPSC, July 19, 2016
- London’s Child and Youth Network 2014 Progress Report and Child and Youth Network Impact Assessment Update – CPSC, Feb 18, 2015
- Healthy Kids Community Challenge and Transfer Payment Agreement – CPSC, Aug 25, 2015

BACKGROUND

What is the Healthy Kids Community Challenge?

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care’s Healthy Kids Community Challenge (HKCC) is a children’s health promotion program of the Province, addressing childhood obesity. The program provides multi-year funding to selected municipalities across the province to encourage local collaborative initiatives/activities aimed at reducing or preventing childhood obesity.

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is based on the EPODE (Ensemble Prévenons l’Obésité des Enfants- Together Let’s Prevent Childhood Obesity) methodology, which is recognized by the World Health Organization as a best practice in childhood unhealthy weights and obesity prevention. The Healthy Kids Community Challenge was developed by the Province of Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) out of recommendations released as part of Ontario’s Healthy Kids Strategy (2013).

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge project is directly linked to several strategies of the City of London’s Strategic Plan under “Strengthening our Community” including:

- Supporting neighbourhood driven activities and decision making
- Supporting the health and well-being of all children, youth, and families in London

The Corporation of the City of London is one of 45 communities across the province participating in this initiative. As a transfer payment recipient of up to \$1.25 million over 3 years, London is implementing local activities based on specific themes related to healthy eating or physical activity identified every 9 months. These themes are identified by the MOHLTC, and are selected based on the latest and best available evidence related to the prevention of childhood unhealthy weights and obesity. To date, London has successfully completed two HKCC themes and is beginning to implement a third theme.

The HKCC is being implemented locally by integrating it with the existing work of London’s Child and Youth Network (CYN) – largely through the CYN’s Healthy Eating/Healthy Physical Activity Priority (HEHPA) – and by aligning goals and activities with those of other existing, allied coalitions, including Middlesex-London *in motion*™. The City of London is accountable for the provincial funds and disburses project funding in consultation with the CYN.

HKCC Activities

“Run. Jump. Play. Every Day.” was the first theme of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, and ran until the end of June 2016. Through this theme, 31 initiatives promoting healthy physical activity were implemented by 46 organizations collaborating in 15 priority neighbourhoods across London. These initiatives included, for example:

- An Indigenous Children’s Healthy Living Camp operated as a partnership between N’Amerind Friendship Centre, At’lohosa, and Healthy Weights Connection and promoting healthy lifestyles within traditional indigenous frameworks.
- Physical Literacy Early Childhood Educator Training, which was associated with a Western University research project evaluating the impact of the training on increasing the physical activity levels of pre-schoolers in 11 London childcare centres.
- Material supports for Community Outdoor Ice Rinks making these volunteer operated amenities easier to flood and maintain.
- ‘Naturalizing’ traditional playgrounds and play equipment given the evidence that the more natural the play environment, the greater the cognitive and physical development of children experiencing it.

The second HKCC theme - “Water Does Wonders” - ran from July 2016 until March 2017. This theme focused on the positive promotion of tap water consumption as a healthy alternative to sugary drinks like pop, juice and sports drinks. Throughout the theme, 19 initiatives were implemented by 55 organizations collaborating in 15 priority neighbourhoods across London. Some of the highlights from this theme included:

- The Comprehensive Drinking Water Infrastructure and Education in Schools Strategy, which amalgamated 5 community-informed projects. This project included the installation of water fountains in 32 elementary schools, complemented by water education programs delivered in those schools.
- Installation of new water refill units at community centres, the London Public Library, the Boys’ and Girls’ Club, and recreation facilities.
- The provision of reusable water bottles to organizations to encourage water consumption at programs and camps. This encouraged many community partners to stop offering juice at their programs and events, and to offer water as the drink of choice.
- Publication of a “Water Does Wonders” interactive family education booklet in partnership with Post Media.

The third HKCC theme is “Choose to Boost Veggies and Fruit”, and runs from April 2017 until December 2017. This theme focuses on increasing the consumption of vegetables and fruit amongst children, youth, and families. The Child and Youth Network recently received approval of the Theme 3 Action Plan from the MOHLTC. The action plan features 24 initiatives that will be implemented by 61 organizations collaborating in neighbourhoods across London. To highlight only a few examples, HKCC funds during this theme will support:

- Increasing the number of Community Gardens which increases the accessibility of fresh vegetables and fruit and educates community members about how to grow their own food. This aligns with the London Community Gardens Program Strategic Plan (2015-2019).
- Expanding food programs for children, youth, and families - e.g. “Food Families” - to showcase the health benefits of vegetables and fruit, increase family buying power, and increase the sharing of practical and affordable ways to eat.
- Activities of a food rescue and redistribution coalition, a project recently endorsed by the London Food Policy Council. This coalition is a network of community agencies which will operate and maintain a food rescue system allowing unsellable food to be collected from retailers and delivered to community agencies which serve vulnerable populations in London. A key component of this initiative is access to a refrigerated truck, the purchase of which will be made possible through HKCC and Child Youth Network funds and which will be maintained and operated by community partners.

These initiatives and the rest of the 24 initiatives supported under the “Choose to Boost Veggies and Fruit” theme, are reinforced by public education campaigns using provincially designed messaging and graphics,

HKCC funding has greatly increased the capacity of the CYN to impact healthy lifestyles amongst children, youth and families in London by supplementing previously existing resources, allowing the leveraging of new resources, and encouraging new collaborations and community based strategies. Initiatives supported in each theme period are intentionally selected based on their impact, likelihood of sustainability and their ability to create and extend new relationships, partnerships and collaborations. As a consequence, London’s neighbourhoods and families will continue to benefit from HKCC funding long after the provincial grant period concludes.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funds to implement community-based projects/initiatives related to the Healthy Kids Community Challenge are provided by the Province of Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The current Provincial commitment is \$1.125 million over three years, running through March 31, 2018.

In support of this program, the Corporation of the City of London contributes half the annual salary as well as accommodation and ancillary costs for one HKCC Co-ordinator within the Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services budget.

Conclusion

Healthy Kids Community Challenge project funding significantly expands the pre-existing efforts of London’s Child and Youth Network, allowing the creation and implementation of new and enhanced strategies targeting childhood obesity and encouraging expansion of local collaborations focused on the healthy habits of London’s children, youth and families.

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