



**City of Kingston**  
**Information Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee**  
**Report Number MAAC-23-007**

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**To:** Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

**From:** Jennifer Campbell, Acting Commissioner, Community Services

**Resource Staff:** Lacricia Turner, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services

**Date of Meeting:** September 7, 2023

**Subject:** Adaptable Programming Update

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**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: 5. Foster healthy citizens and vibrant spaces

Goal: See above

**Executive Summary:**

The City of Kingston is committed to providing accessible, inclusive, equitable and meaningful recreation opportunities for everyone. This commitment is reflected through our programs and services, which aim to eliminate barriers and create a welcoming environment for all.

In 2021, Council approved an update to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) that identified recommendations for recreational services until 2036. Several recommendations have been implemented and new priorities have been established. One of the provisions is related to “Strengthening Service Delivery through Partnerships” which speaks to community partners and service providers offering programs and services throughout the City and within City facilities. This partnership model has generated positive impacts for residents and leveraged new services beyond what the Recreation & Leisure Services Department previously provided. Staff work collaboratively with community service providers who offer these programs and services within the City. One of the programs that was previously offered through Recreation & Leisure Services was the Leisure Connections program. Following the pandemic, and in alignment with the PRMP, the Leisure Connections program was discontinued. The following report outlines the services that were previously offered in the Leisure Connections program, and further highlights which community service providers are currently offering these services within the City.

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Although many community service providers are offering these services separately, the need for a “one stop shop” model for individuals living with exceptionalities was identified. The convenience of accessing a monthly calendar and to be able to plan ahead is a service that is beneficial to families, as navigating these systems can be challenging. Offering a dedicated organization to offer this service and act as a connector, removes many barriers.

The City has partnered with the Bloom Skills Centre to offer this service as a 6-month pilot program. Facilitated by Bloom Skills Centre staff, the program will plan and coordinate social activities and events in the community designed specifically for those living with intellectual disabilities. The program offered one organized community event per week during July and August and will offer two events per week from September to December.

**Recommendation:**

This report is for information only.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

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**Jennifer Campbell, Acting  
Commissioner, Community  
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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### Options/Discussion:

The Leisure Connections Program was designed for adults of mixed abilities and was a year-round social/leisure recreation program for independent or one to one supported adults. This program operated in various capacities from 2010 until March 2020. Prior to the pandemic, the membership offered a coordinated monthly schedule with recreation activities, events and excursions to locally operated facilities, including sports, swimming, bowling, crafts, game nights and a baseball program in the summer. In 2019, there were 55 memberships purchased, and the annual membership fee was \$84.00 with additional fees for the various programs. In alignment with the PRMP recommendations, the program was discontinued as it was recognized that many community service providers were delivering these services within their mandates. There are many local community service providers who have specific mandates that provide inclusive and diverse programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The City of Kingston continues to offer the adapted aquatics programming that was previously offered within the Leisure Connections Program, as this is an area where there is still an identified need within the community.

Staff contacted six local service providers to learn more about their programming. The following community service providers have verified their mandate of services, and highlighted programs that are available through their organizations. Exhibit A provides a chart of the local community service providers including a description of services they currently offer as compared to previously offered programs under the City of Kingston, Leisure Connections programs and activities.

### Community Service Providers

- Community Living Kingston and District
- Ongwanada Resource Centre
- Special Olympics Kingston
- H'Art Studio
- Extend A Family Kingston
- Kingston Thunder Baseball, Challenger Program

Recognizing that although there are many community service providers offering activities, to access them families need to be connected to the respective organizations. Additionally, registering with multiple organizations to access a variety of social programs can be a roadblock for interested individuals, taking additional time and duplication of effort. Staff heard feedback from community members who described that having a central location to view events on a calendar, with a simplified registration process for a range of activities would be beneficial as well as programming that is inclusive to those that might need different supports.

To continue the services that were previously offered through the Leisure Connections program, staff worked to create a partnership with a local community organization, known as the Bloom

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Skills Centre. The Bloom Skills Centre opened in March 2023 in partnership with the City and operates out of the Centre 70 arena. The program initially started with a community café where individuals who are living with intellectual disabilities can learn employment training skills to support them with job opportunities in the community. After a very successful implementation, the program has now expanded to include social skills programs and groups designed specifically for those individuals living with exceptionalities. The emphasis of the program is to provide important connections to community for those often excluded from social activities, helping to improve mental health and wellness as well as build relationships. The program is operating as a pilot with financial support from the City from July to December 2023. The program known as the Cosmo's Club features a monthly calendar of events that is located on the Blooms Skill Centre website. Patrons are encouraged to register to access the list of events and can choose to sign up to one or multiple events per month. Each month offers an assortment of social programs and activities including but not limited to, Beach Blanket Bingo - located at the Culligan Water Park, Hike and Seek where participants can explore the trails of Lemoine Point and game nights with outdoor mini putt or at local arcades. The City of Kingston will also feature a link to the Cosmo's Club registration page on the City's website and any requests for adaptable programming or the Leisure Connections program will be forwarded to the Blooms Skill Centre.

For individuals who cannot access the registration form online, hard copies of the registration form are available at the Blooms Skill Centre Community Cafe located at the Centre 70 arena.

**City of Kingston Aquatics Programs**

The City of Kingston Aquatics Program continues to provide adaptable aquatics to the community. Residents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in aquatics programs, and every effort is made for individuals to participate in integrated programs and/or targeted services. Support persons accompanying participants are admitted to a program and the facility at no cost. Additionally, therapeutic swims are offered in the Leisure Pool which offers warmer water temperatures, bubble bench, spray features, ramped access and saltwater treatment. The Therapeutic Swims are offered multiple times per week, at various times of the day.

**Next Steps**

Staff will work closely with the Bloom Skills Centre to monitor and evaluate the program over the next 6-months to determine if the project will be renewed for 2024.

**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

None

**Notice Provisions:**

None

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**Accessibility Considerations:**

None

**Financial Considerations:**

The Recreation & Leisure Services 2023 Council approved operating budget included funds to support community and neighbourhood programming as part of the new community development initiative. A total of \$14,600 has been allocated to the Blooms Skill Centre to support the Leisure Connections program.

**Contacts:**

Lacricia Turner, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services, 613-546-4291 extension 1815

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Amanda McDonald, Supervisor, Recreation & Community Development

Ben Leslie, Community Development Coordinator, Recreation & Leisure Services

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A Community Service Providers Program Information & Comparison

## **Community Service Providers Program Information & Comparison**

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Baseball Program

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Kingston Thunder Baseball (Challengers Baseball Program) and Special Olympics Kingston (Softball League)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Bowling Nights

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Special Olympics Kingston (Bowling League)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Fitness Classes

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Community Living Kingston & District (Fitness Programs) and Extend A Family Kingston (Day Programs and Adult Summer Camps)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Gym/Sport Nights

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Community Living Kingston and District (Sport Teams - Curling, Golf, Snowboarding) and Special Olympics Kingston (Various Sport Nights/Leagues)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Yoga Nights & Music Programs

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Community Living Kingston and District (Dance & Music Groups), H'Art Studio (Music, Inclusive Dance & Theatre Art) and Extend A Family Kingston (Day Program & Adult Summer Camp)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Art Programs (Crafts, Games, Painting)

**Community Service Provider and Program:** H'Art Studio (Visual Arts, Media Arts, Literary Arts)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Cooking Night

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Ongwanada Resource Centre (Nutritional Services - referral needed) and Community Living Kingston and District (Educational programs - cooking classes)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Social Outings (Dinner, Ice Cream, Coffee, Movies)

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Community Living Kingston and District (Community Inclusion Program) and Extend A Family Kingston (Day Programs)

**City of Kingston Previous Program:** Library Outing

**Community Service Provider and Program:** Community Living Kingston and District (Educational programs - local museums)