

# Memorandum

Date: January 15, 2019

To: Members of Council

From: Jessica Stovin, Recreation Supervisor, Programs

Subject: Friday Night Fusion – Pilot Project Update

In October 2017, Council supported removing the financial barrier to youth participation in the Friday Night Fusion drop-in program ('Fusion') at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness. Creating a free activity for Caledon youth generated a successful social and active youth opportunity.

Fusion is for youth ages ten to seventeen years old and operates on Friday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. which has expanded from the initial pilot of ages thirteen to seventeen.

The program provides the opportunity to be active or a place to get together with positive role models in a safe environment. Types of activities include basketball, gaming stations, foosball, skateboarding, rock climbing and billiards. By removing the financial barrier which consists of a drop-in fee of \$3 dollars, participation rates have increase which help with our ultimate goal in providing youth opportunities and reducing the burden of isolation.

Since the launch of the program in January 2018, Fusion has had over 2,000 youth attendees with 75% of the youth ranging from ten to thirteen years of age and 25% between fourteen and seventeen years of age. Acknowledging the current demographics, the Recreation Division 2019 Work Plan includes collaborating with the 'Youth Voice Collective Impact Group' (Youth Voice) and youth focused community partners to investigate and implement a Fusion model that is more attractive to youth fourteen to seventeen years old.

Youth Voice is committed to long term, sustainable growth opportunities for youth. The Collective intends to "Increase the number of employment opportunities for youth (ages 18-24), in Caledon by 2025." The Fusion program provides a platform to support and collect data to support Youth Voice's initiative.

Fusion will continue to operate on permanent basis Friday evenings at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness. The revenue loss is minimal, at an estimated \$6,000, and will be offset by the introduction of new programs and increased marketing campaigns that will target specific youth interests throughout the year which generate additional revenue.

## **Next Steps:**

It is imperative to continue the Fusion program and it is essential to the positive development of youth and the community as a whole. The Town of Caledon's support and commitment to youth is a means to demonstrating the importance of providing positive opportunities for all.

The Recreation Division will continue to monitor participation rates, identify trends and investigate options to increase participation. By working with community partners and the Youth Voice Collective Impact group, the Town of Caledon is one step closer to being a Youth Friendly Community.