

# Memorandum

Date: May 9, 2023,  
To: Members of Council  
From: Kathleen Prochilo, Supervisor, Community Programs  
Subject: Aquatic Leadership Update

In December 2022, Council approved Staff Report 2022-0472 - Aquatic Leadership Pilot Project, which outlined a cost-free aquatic leadership program for prospective swim instructors and lifeguards. With Council's approval, the program came into effect in January 2023.

This memorandum is intended to provide an update on the success of the pilot project and the direct impact on staff recruitment.

## **BACKGROUND**

Over the past few years, a shortage of aquatics staff has impacted the industry on a regional and national level. The extent of the impact has escalated to the point of requiring a reduction in operating hours, last minute program cancellations due to staff availability, inability to expand programs, and facility closures in some municipalities. To manage this crisis staff have been challenged to come up with creative recruitment and retention strategies to hire and keep staff.

Shortages have been further exacerbated by the pandemic and associated closures and restrictions, where limited opportunities to train and maintain certifications, made it challenging to keep participants motivated and involved.

## **PROJECT IMPACT TO DATE**

To date, nineteen (19) staff have been onboarded as a direct result of the cost-free aquatic pilot project.

In a comparative analysis of participation levels (Table 1), it is evident that the cost-free Aquatics Pilot Project has increased participation.

Table 1: Total Course Participation

Course Name	Total Participation: 2019	Total Participation: 2020	Total Participation: 2021	Total Participation: 2022	Total Participation: 2023 January – August Registrations Only
Bronze Medallion and Emergency First Aid	154	40	39	127	126
Bronze Cross and Standard First Aid	111	18	46	96	110
National Lifeguard	41	0	43	85	64
Swim and Lifesaving Instructor	23	0	42	74	76
	<b>329</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>376</b>

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Due to the interest and success of the project, it is anticipated that the Aquatic Leadership Pilot Project will cost \$15,760.00 for exam fees payable by the Town of Caledon to the certifying organization, Lifesaving Society (Table 2). The original proposed Pilot Project represented a cost to the Town of \$14,155.00 for exam fees based on 2019 participating rates.

Optimistically, the long-term benefits of recruiting more participants in leadership courses further results in additional staff, more programming opportunities and can in turn increase the revenue of swimming lessons. Each successful candidate graduating from the Leadership Program, who becomes an instructor for the Town’s aquatics programs, can create estimated revenue of up to \$12,000 per year.

Table 2: Total Exam Fee Costs

Course Name	Total Participation: 2023 January – August Registrations Only	Exam Fees	Total Exam Fee Expense
Bronze Medallion and Emergency First Aid	126	\$40.00	\$5,040.00
Bronze Cross and Standard First Aid	110	\$50.00	\$5,500.00
National Lifeguard	64	\$40.00	\$2,560.00
Swim and Lifesaving Instructor	76	\$35.00	\$2,660.00
	<b>376</b>		<b>\$15,760.00</b>

## NEXT STEPS

The Aquatics Leadership Pilot Project will continue through the remainder of 2023. Interested participants can continue to register for available courses through to September 3, 2023. In August 2023, remaining courses for the year (September to December 2023) will open for registration, at no-cost.

The net impact of this program for 2023 will be reflected in the year-end operating variance. The program will be evaluated in advance of the 2024 budget process.

## **OTHER COUNCIL ENDORSED AQUATIC STAFFING INITIATIVES**

In addition to the Aquatics Leadership Pilot Project, Council has supported other recruitment and retention efforts, including:

In September 2021, Council approved Staff Report 2021-0309: Aquatic Staff Recruitment and Retention Strategies, which outlined the staffing shortage within the industry and recommendation to convert aquatic casual wages to two full-time permanent positions. Full time lifeguards (position title, Aquatic Lead) have proven to be a successful recruitment, retention, and scheduling decision.

In February 2023, Council approved Staff Report 2023-0013: 2023 Proposed Budget, which included an additional two full-time permanent Aquatic Leads to support the operation of the forthcoming Caledon East Community Complex pool.