



Corporate

 NO: R065

Report

 COUNCIL DATE: April 8, 2002

REGULAR			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	April 3rd, 2002
FROM:	General Manager, Finance, Technology & HR	FILE:	0402-054
SUBJECT:	Active City Employee Wellness Program		

RECOMMENDATION

That the pilot project be converted into an on-going *Active City Employee Wellness* program.

INTENT

To update Council on the success of the pilot project for the Active City Employee Wellness Program.

BACKGROUND

In January 2001, the new *Active City Employee Wellness* program was launched as a pilot project. This program is directed by the Active City Employee (ACE) team, a group of 9 employees from various departments who participated in the development and implementation of the program that was intended to positively impact the health, productivity and morale of City of Surrey employees. Council asked that staff report back on the success of the pilot once it had been in place for one year.

DISCUSSION

Within the existing budget and for an annual cost of approximately \$20 an employee, the revitalized wellness program provides staff and volunteer fire fighters with opportunities to improve health and well-being under three inter-locking streams:

- Healthy City Employees
- Safe City Employees; and
- Active City Employees.

Ongoing funding has been approved as part of the five-year operating budget.

Healthy City Employees

During the pilot project period, the following events were held for City employees and volunteer fire fighters:

Health Screening: Blood pressure and cholesterol screening clinics were held to help employees identify their own health risks. Employees with elevated blood pressure or cholesterol readings were provided with health counseling by a registered nurse and were referred to their family physicians for further follow-up. Several employees expressed appreciation for health screening that assisted them to identify and to work to prevent potential serious illness.

Nutrition: Hosted by a registered dietitian, this lunch ‘n learn session, provided employees with the opportunity to learn more about sensible eating for good health.

Weight Watchers At Work Program: This ongoing program assists employees with safe and healthy weight control and reduction within a supportive group atmosphere.

Influenza Immunization Clinics: Influenza immunization was offered to all City employees and volunteer fire fighters. Over 20% of the workforce participated in this voluntary program for the 2000-2001 flu season.

Hepatitis B Immunization: In conjunction with the provincial WCB Regulations and as a preventative measure, employees who handle blood and bodily fluids as part of their essential duties were provided with the opportunity to receive hepatitis B immunization.

Safe City Employees

During 2001, the following events were held for City employees and volunteer fire fighters:

Wenlido: A self-defense training program for women was offered over a period of six weeks.

Weight Training Orientation: An instruction on the correct use of weight-training equipment, PR&C trainers assisted employees with safely achieving their weight-training goals.

Preventing the Spread of Communicable Diseases: A training matrix for Surrey Fire Fighters was organized to inform Surrey Fire Fighters about how to protect themselves and prevent the spread of infectious diseases while responding to medical aid calls.

Back Care: To help employees be safe on and off the job, sessions about proper body mechanics and back care were provided to outside workers.

Bike Clinic and Rodeo: These events offered cyclists the opportunity to learn more about road safety, proper bike maintenance and theft prevention measures.

Active City Employees

During 2001, the following events were held in an effort to encourage employees to “get moving and be active”:

Employee Facility Pass: An employee facility pass granting access to all City of Surrey recreation facilities was offered to all City employees and volunteer firefighters at a significantly reduced rate. Over 300 employees purchased a facility pass for 2001.

Employee Wellness Challenge: Over 230 employees participated in the employee wellness challenge. With the spirit of competition alive and well, 44 teams of employees challenged their peers to get moving and be active. Each team accumulated points for choosing healthy options for commuting to and from work, eating healthy meals and participating in recreation and exercise outside of work. Prizes were awarded on a participatory basis and recognition given to those who achieved outstanding scores.

Green Thumb Series: PR&C employees volunteered their time and expertise to host four lunch 'n learn sessions related to gardening, pruning, landscaping, and bird watching in an effort to motivate employees to get outdoors and be active.

Darts' Hill Garden Tour: In conjunction with the *Green Thumb Series*, employees and their families were invited to tour the magnificent Darts' Hill Garden.

Vancouver Sun Run: To encourage participation and show support, the Active City Employee wellness program subsidized the corporate team registration fee.

To assist the ACE team in obtaining stakeholder input, an Employee Wellness Survey was conducted in May of 2001. The survey generated a response rate of 21%. Valuable input was obtained from the respondents regarding ideas and suggestions for future wellness events, the preferred mode of communication for promoting wellness events, the preferred time for holding wellness events, and participation rates. Of the survey respondents, 55% have participated in the Wellness program.

An *Active City Employee Wellness* newsletter was developed and distributed to all employees and volunteer fire fighters throughout 2001. Six issues promoting the wellness program and related articles have been distributed.

Less than a halfway through our pilot project, perhaps the single biggest indicator that the City of Surrey was on the right track with promoting employee well-being was the formal recognition of receiving the British Columbia Medical Association's award for Excellence in Health Promotion.

In general, the programs that the ACE Team has presented have been well attended. The Team is constantly striving to communicate to the employees through surveys and regular newsletters, in order that the program continues to meet the needs of the employees.

CONCLUSION

The Active City Employee Wellness Program has positively impacted the health and morale of employees and volunteer firefighters. The Funding for this program is set at \$28,600 and has been set aside in the 2002 Five Year Financial Plan. It is therefore, recommended that the pilot project be converted into an on-going *Active City Employee Wellness* program. It would continue to be administered by the ACE Team.

Vivienne Wilke, CGA

General Manager,

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