



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** June 19, 2021

From: Elizabeth Ayers, Director, Recreation and Sport Services **File:** 11-7000-01/2021-Vol 01

Re: **National Drowning Prevention Week July 18 - 24, 2021**

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled "National Drowning Prevention Week July 18 - 24, 2021," dated June 19, 2021, from the Director, Recreation and Sport Services be received for information.

Elizabeth Ayers
 Director, Recreation and Sport Services
 (604-247-4669)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
<i>Sevenc</i>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS:
	<i>CS</i>
APPROVED BY CAO	
<i>[Signature]</i>	

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the City's participation in National Drowning Prevention Week July 18 - 24, 2021, and the actions taking place to support this important initiative.

This report supports the following focus areas from the City of Richmond Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019 – 2024:

Awareness and Understanding: Richmond residents understand the opportunities and benefits of participation in recreation and sport.

Physical Literacy and Sport for Life: Richmond residents have the fundamental movement skills, competence, confidence and motivation to move for a lifetime.

This report also supports the following focus area of the City of Richmond Community Wellness Strategy 2018 – 2023:

Foster healthy, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness.

Analysis

National Drowning Prevention week, an annual public awareness campaign initiated by the Lifesaving Society of Canada, is taking place July 18 - 24, 2021. Drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional death among Canadians under the age of 60 and National Drowning Prevention Week promotes safe participation in water related activities and reminds everyone to be prepared before heading out to the water.

There are seven key themes to focus education and initiatives on based on the major risk factors identified in the Lifesaving Society's annual 'Drowning' reports from 2016-2020 which aim to reduce drownings:

1. **Prevent Drowning** – Over 400 Canadians die in preventable water related accidents each year.
2. **Supervise Children** – If you are not within arm's reach you have gone too far.
3. **Boating Safety** – Wear a lifejacket when in a boat.
4. **Learn to Swim** – 19 per cent of drownings in Canada were caused by an unintentional fall into the water.
5. **Stay Sober In, On, and Around the Water** – Both alcohol and cannabis use impair balance, judgement, and reflexes. Stay sober when in, on or around the water.
6. **Open Water Safety** – Make Smart Choices before going in, on or around the water.
7. **Be Water Smart All Year** – Take a learn to swim, lifesaving or first aid class.

Local Action

The City of Richmond plays a significant role in promoting and educating citizens in safe water activity throughout the year. On average, 18,000 individuals participate in swimming lessons and learn water safety techniques each year, participants range in age from toddlers to seniors. This vital life skill is one of the most effective strategies in preventing drowning fatalities locally and across the country. It is important to note that less than one per cent of drownings happen in water supervised by a lifeguard. Most accidents occur in natural waterways and backyard swimming pools.

Education and training is another important strategy in the prevention of accidental drownings. Richmond is a leader in providing leadership training with over 2,500 youth and young adults enrolling in courses each year to learn to be a Lifeguard or Water Safety instructor. In addition, the City of Richmond offers an educational and skills testing program called WaterSafe to all children participating in summer camps.

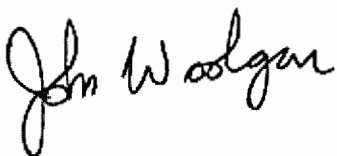
This year during National Drowning Prevention Week, staff will be engaging the public in water safety education online, at all four swimming pools and in summer camp programs across the City. The Swim to Survive program teaches the essential skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water and it will be offered to the community free of charge. Finally, National Drowning Prevention Week initiatives are all supported by a promotional campaign that includes the E-newsletter, press release and social media feeds.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

National Drowning Prevention Week is well supported in the City by initiatives that teach and promote drowning prevention skills and strategies in the community. These local and national initiatives provide an important foundation in preventing accidental drownings across the country.



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