



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
Date: June 19, 2019

From: Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation and Sport Services
File: 11-7143-01/2019-Vol 01

Re: **National Drowning Prevention Week July 21–27, 2019**

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled “National Drowning Prevention Week July 21–27, 2019,” dated June 19, 2019, 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	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO	

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the City's participation in National Drowning Prevention Week and the local initiatives 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

National Drowning Prevention Week is taking place from July 21, 2019 to July 27, 2019, and Richmond Aquatic Services is actively taking part with a number of local promotions and initiatives. This is a national annual campaign of the Lifesaving Society to advocate and promote drowning prevention strategies in local communities across Canada. The Lifesaving Society is the number one service provider/trainer for lifeguards in Canada and is recognized by all provinces and territories.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that drowning is a major public health issue and has called on the world's nations to ramp up drowning prevention efforts. In Canada, 500 people on average drown each year, and it is now the second leading cause of unintentional death for children under the age of 10.

It is worth noting that less than one per cent of drownings occur in a lifeguard supervised setting. From backyard pools to boating, fishing and other recreational pursuits, the importance of developing life skills to respond to these emergencies cannot be overstated. As an island city, Richmond is particularly vulnerable to tragedies in and around various bodies of water.

Through the provision of swim lessons and advanced aquatic training, Richmond Aquatic Services is actively promoting and providing training and safety education to ensure Richmond residents are prepared for an emergency in the water.

Additional initiatives that are taking place during National Drowning Prevention Week include:

- Free Swim to Survive courses in all of our pools;
- Basic drowning prevention courses;
- Public education stations in swimming pools; and
- Water safety games for the public.

These initiatives are supported by an educationally focused promotion campaign including:

- Proclamation from the Mayor declaring July 21–27, 2019 to be National Drowning Prevention Week;
- Recreation services E-newsletter;
- Social media, including Twitter and Facebook; and
- Press release.

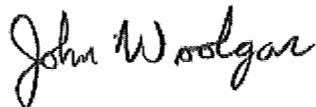
The WHO reports that teaching young children basic survival swimming skills can have a life-long immunization effect against drowning. With the existing pools and the new Minoru Centre for Active Living, the City of Richmond is continuously working to ensure residents of all ages, especially children, learn this important life skill. In 2018, 9,721 children were enrolled in swim lessons and to June 30, 2019, 4,263 have been enrolled.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Drowning continues to be one of the top causes of death for children under 10 in Canada. The City of Richmond is a strong advocate for continued training and education to ensure no more of these preventable tragedies occur.



John Woolgar
Manager, Aquatic and Arena Services
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