



Council report

Meeting date:	April 20, 2021
Title:	Recreation – Community Services Agreement Re. Elephant Thoughts Summer Camp Program
Prepared by:	Kodey Hewlett, Recreation Supervisor
Reviewed by:	Laura Johnston, CAO

Recommendation

That council receive the report “Recreation – Community Services Agreement Re. Elephant Thoughts Summer Camp Program” for information AND;

That council consider approval of the bylaw containing the Community Services Agreement during the bylaw portion of the meeting.

Executive summary

Staff is proposing a shared service (community services) agreement with Elephant Thoughts education and camp program. The shared service would allow the municipality and Elephant Thoughts to offer an exciting camp program at a nominal fee for all West Grey residents. The proposed program would operate eight of the ten weeks of the 2021 summer season with the ability for expansion pending program registration status.

Background and discussion

Elephant Thoughts Riverstone Eco-Retreat is a 136-acre property located off Concession 2 just outside of Durham. The property includes many amenities such as hiking trails, rivers, streams, gardens, and open green spaces. The property is owned and operated by Elephant Thoughts, a diverse and passionate group of educators who focus on delivering high standards of education regardless of geographic or socio-economic barriers. Active since 2002, they have positively affected the lives of over a million children worldwide. Their presence has also been felt around the globe supporting education for some of the world's



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most vulnerable children. Across Canada, partnerships with Indigenous communities focus on supporting teachers and youth to achieve high standards of education creating some of the most innovative and effective programs to date. This organization shares resources, and has a history of working through collaboration. Their work is based on requests from the communities and take guidance from fostering the growth and development. Throughout all of Elephant Thoughts programming, they nurture values of strong environmental stewardship and respect for diversity and inclusion.

The current camp program the municipality offers has always worked well; servicing the needs of the community and offering a viable child care option. The primary gap is the lack of space to grow and flourish into an outdoor based education camp. Entering into a shared service agreement for summer camp programming with Elephant Thoughts is not geared to increase revenues, or create a new program, rather the goal is to better support the needs of the community and offer childcare to every family at an affordable, obtainable rate. The current provincial target rate for affordable, obtainable childcare is \$10.00 per day. In merging resources and grant opportunities, the two organizations are able to offer an award winning camp program for \$10.00 a day per camper.

The proposed program will operate in conjunction with Elephant Thoughts and West Grey summer staff to run an outdoor eco retreat and science camp providing accessible childcare. Given the subsidized nature of the program, residents will be asked to sign up for a maximum of one week per participant with the ability to request additional weeks following registration close, if space permits. The summer camp program will operate eight one-week programs (five-day cohorts with the exception of holidays) from Monday June 28, 2021 to Friday September 3, 2021. An additional two weeks may be added pending registration status.

Legal and legislated requirements

None

Financial and resource implications

In combination with a full aquatics program (pending COVID restrictions) recreation staff anticipate hitting the revenue targets outlined in the 2021 budget reports with minimal budget impact.



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Staffing implications

None

Consultation

- Jeremy Rhodes, Elephant Thoughts Executive Director
- Marni Sandell, Elephant Thoughts Director of Education
- Laura Johnston, West Grey CAO
- Kerri Mighton, West Grey Director of Finance / Treasury
- Genevieve Scharback, Director of Administration / Clerk
- Town of Caledon, Recreation Services Division

Alignment to strategic vision plan

Pillar: Work Together / Promote Community

Goal: Build Partnerships / a Cultural Hub

Strategy: Develop Programs to Encourage Youth Involvement / Support Recreational Programming

Attachments

None

Next steps

Following passing of the Community Services Agreement bylaw recreation staff will finalize program planning and promotion with Elephant Thoughts staff for program registration and promotion to launch late April.

Respectfully submitted:

Kodey Hewlett, Recreation Supervisor