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# Niagara Region

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**REPORT TO:** Co-Chairs and Members of Public Health and Social Services Committee

**SUBJECT:** ProKids Program - Providing Recreational/Cultural Opportunities for Children/Youth  
2008 Year End Report

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## RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommend to Regional Council that this report be received for information.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 11,180 is the cumulative total of children/youth who participated in recreational/cultural activity of their choice since program inception in January 2000
- In 2008, 2,014 children/youth participated representing an additional 319 (18.8% increase) over 2007 owing in part to the Niagara Regional Chairman's Charity Golf Tournament contribution of \$50,000
- More than 200 recreational/cultural service clubs have supported ProKids placement opportunities since the program's inception
- ProKids eligibility and placement access opportunities have been extended to include children residing in all affordable housing locations including co-operatives and rent geared to income as well as children/youth whose families' annual income is less than \$40,000
- ProKids partnerships extended to include RAFT (Resource Agency for Teens) and Goodwill Industries Niagara. These programs support "at risk" youth participation in programs of their choice
- As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the ProKids brand, a new logo for ProKids was developed in 2008. The logo creates a fun, youthful, positive atmosphere to represent the benefits of recreation and culture provided by this program.
- The YMCA of Niagara along with Niagara Region Children's Services is hosting the seventh annual ProKids Program celebration on Tuesday April 7, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Atrium
- Regional Councillors are invited to participate in the celebration and hear testimonials from children/youth and service providers who have participated or sponsored a ProKids recreational/cultural activity
- Funding of \$250,000 is available through the Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities budget as part of the Community Reinvestment funding resulting from the implementation of the Ontario Child Benefit. Previously this was available from the National Child Benefit savings program.

- Eligibility through Children's Services has been expanded beyond families in receipt of social assistance, subsidized child care and tenants residing in social housing units directly operated by Niagara Regional Housing to include children residing in affordable housing cooperatives and rent geared to income residences as well as children/youth whose families annual income is less than \$40,000
- A 16 member community-based ProKids Advisory Committee (see Appendix II) provides advice and guidance to the initiative with representatives from recreational/cultural service providers, service clubs, private sector businesses and social service agencies
- The YMCA of Niagara continues to be the program placement coordinator as selected by community representatives from Niagara Community Foundation, Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Tourism and the Trillium Foundation
- The YMCA of Niagara seeks out additional donations to expand the \$100 allocated per participant annually in order that eligible children/youth can participate in the recreation/cultural activity of their choice
- ProKids partnership has been further extended in 2008 to include RAFT (Resource Association for Teens) and Goodwill Industries Niagara community outreach agencies supporting "at risk" youth participation in after school programming including ProKids.
- Outcome measurements continue to be documented and testimonials from children/youth/service provider agencies and service club members reinforce the benefits of the ProKids program
- As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the ProKids brand, a new logo was developed in 2008. The logo represents and promotes a fun and youthful approach to support the benefits of children/youth participating in the recreation/cultural activity of their choice
- The 2008 Niagara Regional Chairman's Golf Tournament provided a substantial \$50,000 contribution that permitted access for additional children/youth to participate, created awareness of ProKids, and a degree of financial stability critical to maintain a program that is dependent on alternative revenue sources in the form of contributions

The ProKids initiative has:

- Successfully complimented recreational/cultural infrastructures which have long existed throughout Niagara
- Supported the principle of shared community responsibility and collaboration between organizations/agencies and private sector service clubs and businesses
- Utilized existing community programs and infrastructures to provide program placement opportunities and to encourage in-kind contributions
- Supported research which documents that participation in recreational/cultural activities contributing to the development of happy, healthy and more resilient children and youth.

Investment in ProKids as a component of a preventive health model continues to be a good investment which reaps positive returns for participants and their families.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

  
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Brian Hutchings, Commissioner  
Community Services Department  
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Mike Trojan  
Chief Administrative Officer

*This report was prepared by Janice Horner, Manager and reviewed by Kathryn O'Hagan-Todd, Director, and Children's Services.*

- Appendix I - Service Providers by Municipality 2000 - 2008
- Appendix II - Advisory Committee Membership
- Appendix III - ProKids Testimonials
- Appendix IV - ProKids Logo

### **Niagara Falls Service Providers**

- Adrenaline Music
- Audrey Watkins Highland Dance
- Autism Society of Ontario
- BAM pop Porter's Boxing Club
- Bond School of Music
- Boon City Boxing
- Boys and Girls Club of Niagara
- Brock University
- Canadian Red Cross of Niagara
- Cataract Bowling
- Centre Stage Dance Studio
- Chippawa Martial Arts
- City of Niagara Falls Parks & Recreation
- Club Roma Minor Soccer
- Dayboll Fitness
- District School Board of Niagara
- Doranne Cooper Music
- Fairview Bowling
- Fascination Dance Studio
- Fleur de lys Dance Troup
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Greater Niagara Baseball Association
- Hardbodies
- Imagination Dance and Fitness
- John Mergel Music
- Kid Proof
- Kindermusik Melodies
- Mad Science of Niagara
- Mark Rodgers Music
- Martial Arts Centre
- Mikes Music
- Miss All Canadian Starmakers
- Murphy's Music
- Niagara Academy of Tennis
- Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Niagara Falls Art Gallery
- Niagara Falls Girls Minor Hockey
- Niagara Falls Girls Soccer Assoc.
- Niagara Falls Boys Soccer Club
- Niagara Falls Boxing Club
- Niagara Falls Badminton Club
- Nancy Gruhl's Skating
- Musically Inclined
- Music for Young Children
- Niagara Falls Lightning Gymnastics
- Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Assoc.
- Niagara Falls Recreational Minor Hockey Assoc.
- Niagara Falls Red Raiders Basketball
- Niagara Falls Ringette Association
- Niagara Falls School of Drama
- Niagara Falls Soccer Club
- Niagara Girls Minor Softball
- Niagara Regional Minor Football Assoc.
- Niagara Regional Street Hockey Centre
- Niagara Sportsplex
- Niagara Twirling Maple Leafs
- Ontario Conservatory of Music
- Ontario Early Years Centre
- Peterson Community Workshop
- Private Instructor – Music
- Pure Fitness
- Quantum Niagara Gymnastics
- Redeemer Bible Church
- Scouts Canada
- Seido Kan Karate
- Shamrock Boxing Club
- Sherry Norris Highland Dance
- St. John's Ambulance Cadets
- Stamford Skating Club
- Summer Fun Ice Program
- Tigers Lair Studio
- United Family Martial Arts
- Wilderness Trust
- Won Son Tae Kwon Do
- YMCA Of Niagara - McBainCommunity
- Zenshiin Martial Arts

### **Niagara-on-the-Lake Service Providers**

- Mad Science of Niagara
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Soccer
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Minor Hockey Assoc.
- YMCA of Niagara

### St. Catharines Service Providers

- All Purpose Tae Kwon Do
- Baby and Me Studio
- Backstage Dance
- Ballet Etc.
- Ball Hockey Niagara
- BHI – Ball Hockey International
- Body Shop
- Boys and Girls Club of Niagara
- Broadway Lights
- Brock University
- Brock University – Rodman Hall
- Burtnik Karate
- Burtnik Karate Kids
- Cedar Ridge
- Champion Martial Arts
- City of St. Catharines
- Class Act
- Club Roma Soccer
- Concord Soccer Club
- Creative Dance Plus
- CYO Basketball
- CYO Minor Hockey
- Dance Designs
- Dance FX
- Defensive Arts Training Centre
- District School Board of Niagara
- Fairview Bowling Lanes
- Fascination Dance Studio
- Fitness Alive
- Fittogether
- Garden City Kiwanis Hockey Club
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Glenridge Bible Church
- Glenridge Martial Arts
- Golden Tiger Kung Fu
- Grantham Optimist Youth Baseball
- Great Big Theatre Company
- Gymnastics Energy
- Inner Peace Yoga
- Janice Luey Dance Co.
- Jeongs Martial Arts
- John Lumen School of Music
- Kathi Plug Power Skate
- Music City Instruments
- Mustard Seed Children's Theatre
- Niagara Academy of Tennis
- Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Niagara Conservatory of Music
- Niagara Dome Ball Hockey
- Niagara Elementary Instrumental Music
- Niagara Instrumental Music
- Niagara Rapids Volleyball
- Niagara Regional Minor Football Assoc.
- Niagara Regional Native Centre
- Noelia Bonato Music
- Ontario Conservatory of Music
- Ontario Early Years Centre
- Pioneers Group
- Port Dalhousie Legion Softball
- Port Weller Residents Assoc.
- Port Weller Soccer League
- Premiere Fitness – Bunting Rd
- Private Instructor – Music
- Rhythm Generations Dance
- Rodman Hall Arts Centre
- Rysons Music Inc.
- Saturn Stables - YDZ
- Scouts Canada
- Seido Kan Karate
- Skate with Friends
- Soccer Niagara
- Spartan Lacrosse
- St. Catharines Ball Hockey
- St. Catharines Boxing Club
- St. Catharines Collegiate
- St. Catharines Jets Girls Soccer
- St. Catharines Ladies Softball League
- St. Catharines Squash and Tennis Club
- St. Catharines Minor Baseball Assoc.
- St. Catharines Minor Hockey
- St. Catharines Minor Lacrosse Assoc.
- St. Catharines Raquet Club
- St. Catharines Recreational Skate
- St. Catharines Rowing Club
- St. Catharines Summer Hockey
- Strictly Biz Dance Studio

- District School Board of Niagara
- Eastside Lanes
- Fonthill Gymnastics
- Geoffrey Chapman Modelling
- Girl Guides of Canada
- I CAN T.E.R.
- Imagination Dance & Fitness
- Jolis Dance Studio
- Kick It!
- Kingsway Bowling Centre
- La Boite A Soleil
- Mad Science of Niagara
- Midwest Karate
- Miss All Canadian Starmakers
- Miss Dar's School of Dance
- Modern Vision Martial Arts
- Nappers Boxing Club
- Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Niagara Children & Youth Services
- Niagara Rapids Volleyball
- Niagara Splash Volleyball
- Niagara Razorbacks
- Niagara Regional Minor Football Assoc.
- St. John's Ambulance
- Super Cheer
- Susan Dube Piano
- Tail Wagging Depot
- Tonic Music Studios
- Welland Association of Community Living
- Welland Figure Skating Club
- Welland Historical Museum
- Welland Judo Club
- Welland Karate Studio
- Welland Minor Basketball Association
- Welland Minor Hockey Association
- Welland Music Academy
- Welland Mustangs Baseball
- Welland Raiders Lacrosse
- Welland Soccer Club
- Welland Tae Kwon Do
- Welland Tennis Club
- Welland Wado Kai Karate Club
- Won Son Tae Kwon Do
- X Fitness
- YMCA of Niagara

#### **West Lincoln Service Providers**

- West Lincoln Baseball Assoc.
- West Lincoln Minor Hockey Association
- West Lincoln Skating Club
- West Lincoln T Ball
- West Lincoln Youth Soccer Club

### ProKids Testimonials

*Thank you for letting my baby and I join the Y to take swimming lessons together  
We are having so much fun and I am meeting some other Mums making me feel not  
so alone caring for my baby*

*18 year old Mum raising her baby on her own*

I am raising my Grandchildren alone and I never thought that I would have to do this. My husband past away this past year and my daughter helps me with her kids when she can but that's not very often  
Knowing that my grand kids can play in the sports of their choice is very helpful  
My husband and I have been tax payers all our lives but I really need this help right now as I am living on a small pension  
What a wonderful service –thank you

Grandmother raising two grandchildren alone

8 year old grandson –playing soccer and taking swimming lessons

10 year old granddaughter playing baseball and taking swimming lessons