

# Staff Report



Community Services Department

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**REPORT TO:** Community and Infrastructure Services Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** January 29, 2024

**SUBMITTED BY:** Mark, Hildebrand, Director, Neighbourhood Programs & Services, 519-741-2200 ext. 7687

**PREPARED BY:** Lori Palubeski, Manager Program & Resource Services, 519-741-2200 ext. 7623

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** All

**DATE OF REPORT:** January 22, 2024

**REPORT NO.:** CSD-2024-017

**SUBJECT:** Online Older Adult Programming - Baycrest@Home

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## RECOMMENDATION:

That the General Manager of Community Services and Deputy CAO be authorized to execute an agreement with The Jewish Home for the Aged for the use of a web-based platform aimed at improving the quality of life of older adults, satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to seek authorization to proceed with the City of Kitchener's participation in the BayCrest@Home virtual pilot program to further support older adults in their homes.
- As was demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic, there continues to be a need for the use of virtual program platforms to improve service accessibility and delivery to support older adults in their ability to age in place.
- There are no financial implications associated with the participation in the pilot.
- Participation in this program will assist the City of Kitchener in the delivery of its current home and telephone-based programming while expanding the diversity of its virtual content, services, and resources for older adults.
- This report supports **Fostering a Caring City Together: Focuses on welcoming residents of all ages, backgrounds & experiences; residents working on decisions with a meaningful influence; healthy, thriving residents with easy access to diverse & inclusive programs & services.**

## BACKGROUND:

BayCrest@Home is a virtual programming platform for older adults that was developed by The Jewish Home for the Aged. The program was funded by the Community Services Recovery Fund which was an investment from the Government of Canada to support charities and non-

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profits in their ability to adapt and to support post pandemic recovery and the resulting long-term impact to older adults.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the City of Kitchener developed several responsive programs and services to support older adults who were experiencing isolation in their homes. These programs included virtual and telephone-based programs, social support calls and home delivery activity kits. Today, these programs continue to be offered however the content, variety and diversity of the virtual programs could be enhanced.

### **REPORT:**

Baycrest is a global leader in aging and brain health and has developed a successful virtual program - Baycrest@Home. It is a virtual wellness platform that focuses on supporting older adults and their families with curated content that assists them to stay active, connected, and healthier while living in their homes. The platform utilizes Zoom to offer several daily activities including fitness activities, art workshops and wellness activities.

By participating in this pilot, Kitchener's older adults and their caregivers will be able to participate in a suite of online programs via the Baycrest@Home Zoom platform. Staff will add this suite of virtual programs to our current inventory of programs and will utilize our existing registration process. This opportunity will increase and broaden the diversity and quantity of our current virtual program content. The platform provides unlimited access to 40 hours of programming, 7 days per week – **all free of charge**. Any Kitchener older adult, with an active net account will have access to online workshops, peer supports, arts and fitness-based activities and interactive games. Caregivers will have online access to discussion groups, supports and resources.

Staff were approached to participate in the project which is an extension of Baycrest@Home's dementia-inclusive virtual platform to 10 community-based organizations who serve older adults. As a participating organization, the City of Kitchener will have access to the full suite of virtual programs – which includes culturally diverse content. Additionally, staff will have access to participation and evaluation data that will assist in future programming planning and development.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report supports **Fostering a Caring City Together: Focuses on welcoming residents of all ages, backgrounds & experiences; residents working on decisions with a meaningful influence; healthy, thriving residents with easy access to diverse & inclusive programs & services.**

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Operating Budget.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

COLLABORATE – Staff will collaborate and communicate with the organizations whom are involved in the pilot in order to evaluate the project and to explore the need for new programs, supports or enhancements that can improve program delivery.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

There are no previous reports/authorities related to this matter

**APPROVED BY:** Must be the CAO or a General Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Baycrest@Home Organization-Level Agreement