



CITY OF HAMILTON

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
General Manager's Office**

TO: Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: June 11, 2012	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Pay It Forward Movement (CS12026) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)	
SUBMITTED BY: Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	PREPARED BY: Marjorie Walker 905-546-2424 ext. 4837
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Mayor correspond with the Premier of Ontario in support of the "Pay It Forward Day" initiative, encouraging the Premier to follow the lead of British Columbia in proclaiming the last Thursday of every April "Pay It Forward Day"; and,
- (b) That the Outstanding Business List Item, respecting "Pay it Forward Day", be considered complete and removed from the Emergency and Community Services Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the April 10, 2012, Emergency and Community Services (E&CS) Committee meeting, staff were directed to report back to the committee with recommendations on how best to communicate to the Premier the City's support respecting a provincial proclamation for Pay It Forward Day.

At this meeting, Rachel Adema-Hannes, Professor at Mohawk College and Stephanie Slye, a Journalism student, made a presentation to E&CS on behalf of Pay It Forward International, asking for the City to support her request to the Premier that the Province of Ontario proclaim the last Thursday of every April “Pay It Forward Day”.

The principle of the “Pay It Forward” (PIF) international movement begins with doing a favour for another person without any expectation of being paid back. One would request that the recipient of that favour do the same for someone else in hopes that this spirit of giving will multiply. The unconditional favour can be large or small. Pay It Forward Day is about all people, from all walks of life giving to someone else and making a positive difference.

Researchers have proven that simple daily acts of kindness have a positive affect on our health and well-being.

Rachel Adema-Hannes and her students at Mohawk College are paying it forward by reaching out to local community groups and helping them build capacity by offering expertise and resources. The students are compiling an ‘SOS Expertise’ list for local non-profit agencies needing services beyond their areas of expertise or resources. The agency gets a service free of charge and the students gain experience and build a network. With funding cuts and limited resources, it is their intention to pay it forward to help make a difference.

Alternatives for Consideration –Not Applicable

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial implications associated with Report CS12026.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with Report CS12026.

Legal: There are no legal implications associated with Report CS12026.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“Pay if Forward” is a global philanthropic movement inspired by the novel of the same name by Catherine Ryan Hyde. This book was the impetus for a movie, a non-profit foundation, and inspired millions of good deeds around the world.

The movement was founded in 2007 in Australia to further altruistic goodwill and has spread globally. It is based on the premise that people are genuinely giving by nature

but so caught up in a fast paced world of work and family responsibilities that they are fast losing human connections with others and becoming a less caring society.

The principle of this international movement begins with doing a random act of kindness for another person without any expectation of being paid back. The motivation for this favour is simply the hope that this spirit of unconditional giving will be passed on and multiplied. The unconditional favour can be large or small.

Currently, the Pay it Forward movement is active in 52 countries. In Canada, Pay It Forward International has coordinators in [British Columbia](#), [Alberta](#), [Saskatchewan](#), [New Brunswick](#), [Newfoundland/Labrador](#), [Ontario](#) and [Quebec](#). Organizers have received Proclamations from the Province of British Columbia and six municipalities, Ottawa (Ontario), Pickering (Ontario), Calgary (Alberta), Okotoks (Alberta), Williams Lake (British Columbia), and the town of Nackawic (New Brunswick).

While the movement is relatively new in Ontario, with coordinators in Ottawa and Pickering, Rachel Adema-Hannes felt a need locally and integrated the movement into Mohawk College in November 2011. They hosted their first successful Pay It Forward day in April 2012 and have since sent a letter and petition to Premier McGuinty requesting he proclaim the last Thursday of every April as Pay It Forward Day. There is currently an online petition at the Pay It Forward blog (www.payitforward.mohawkcollege.ca) which is garnering additional support.

In April 2012, participants from 52 countries paid it forward generating over three million acts of kindness. Pay It Forward Day was featured internationally on TV stations such as CBS and Fox and through various print, radio, and social media. Participants from hundreds of schools, universities, and businesses experienced the power of giving and set off a positive ripple effect with each good deed.

There are many examples of paying it forward – from a simple purchase of a coffee for a stranger, letting a shopper ahead pass to the front of in line, cleaning a neighbour's home, reading to children at a local library, repairing computers or building a website for a local non-profit agency.

Researchers have proven that simple daily acts of kindness have a positive affect on both health and happiness, strengthen the immune system and increase peoples sense of well-being. A number of scientific studies show that Acts of Kindness result in significant health benefits, both physical and mental, for those who perform them. As well, when we participate in this movement we build stronger buoyant communities.¹

¹ <http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

The intention of Pay It Forward Day is not just one day on which acts of kindness are generated, rather, it is to serve as a reminder to perform acts of kindness throughout the rest of the year.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Rachel Adema-Hannes, Professor of Nursing, Mohawk College

Darlene L. Doskoch, Manager Employment and Social Programs

Canadian Mental Health Association - International Pay It Forward Day - Canadian Founder/Coordinator

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Researchers have noted that random acts of kindness and awakening ‘the good’ in ones self has a positive impact on both physical and mental health and can affect many of behaviors including compassion, trust, empathy and the ability to bond with others.

A study by behavioral psychologist, David McClelland, indicates that simply being a witness to acts of kindness can boost your immunity. In the study, students watched a documentary in which Mother Teresa was helping the poor in Calcutta. When tested, the students showed a significant increase in their Immunoglobulin A cells (important immune cells). Experts agree that intentional routine acts of kindness can improve health².

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

² *Health Progress*, July - August 2009. Copyright © 2009 by The Catholic Health Association of the United States

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization

- ◆ A culture of excellence
- ◆ More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- ◆ An enabling work environment - respectful culture, well-being and safety, effective communication
- ◆ Council and SMT are recognized for their leadership and integrity

Intergovernmental Relationships

- ◆ Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

Growing Our Economy

- ◆ An improved customer service

Social Development

- ◆ People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

Healthy Community

- ◆ An engaged Citizenry

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

None