



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 12, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	F.O.R.E. Golf Program Update (CES15039) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Information:

This purpose of this report is to provide an update on the F.O.R.E (*Fun Organized Recreational Enjoyment*) Golf Program. The Program was designed and launched in 2014 as a means to engage young people ages 10 to 16 in the game of golf.

Golf is a low intensity, high reward workout that teaches fundamental movement skills such as hand/eye coordination, agility and balance. Golf also teaches important life skills such as patience, respect for the rules of sport and self-confidence. The F.O.R.E. Golf Program was implemented as a means to break down barriers that prevented children and youth from low income families from participating in golf. This program follows in the footsteps of the highly successful Skate the Dream Program (initiated in 2011) that has engaged over 400 kids in a low-cost learn to skate and play hockey program.

The creation and successful implementation of the F.O.R.E. Golf Program was spearheaded through the leadership of the Ward 8 Councillor with the assistance of Recreation Development staff and the golf professionals at the City operated golf courses. A partnership was also formed with the Big Brothers & Big Sisters to assist with identifying children and youth to participate in the initial 2014 Program.

The teaching of fundamental golf skills in the F.O.R.E. Golf Program is greatly assisted through the use of a mobile sports simulator that was purchased with Ward 8 Area Rating Funds. The simulator is mobile and can be set up in a 10 foot by 20 foot space. The simulator employs a virtual reality camera system that allows the user to use real sports equipment with immediate and accurate feedback for 10 different sports and activities. The simulator can also be used as a screen projector for movie nights or for large presentations.

In 2014, City of Hamilton golf professionals introduced participants to fundamental golf skills during a series of indoor lessons on the golf simulator before moving to the outdoors as the weather allowed. A total of 30 children successfully completed the program in 2014. The 2014 program concluded with a celebration event where the participants received their own set of used golf clubs that were obtained through a city wide equipment drive. Participants also played their first round of golf (with their parents in attendance) at the Chedoke Municipal Golf Course.

In 2015, the F.O.R.E. Golf Program was fortunate to add another partner to the program, the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. Through support provided by the Jumpstart Charities, the F.O.R.E. Golf Program was able to expand to accommodate 40 children. Each participant was provided with a new set of golf clubs and golf bag through an arrangement made between Jumpstart and Sport Check Sporting Goods. At the end of the season in May 2015, participants were given a departing gift that included golf balls, golf tees, golf magazines, and applications to subsidized sport opportunities through Jump Start and the Recreation Fee Assistance Program.

Since its debut in 2014, the F.O.R.E. Golf Program has graduated 70 golfers who have left the program with knowledge of the fundamental skills of the game, the equipment necessary to participate, and an avenue to pursue subsidy for Junior Golf Memberships at City of Hamilton golf courses. Planning is already underway for the 2016 program.