



## Community Impact Programs

Item 6D

November 18, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

**Report:** TSC:2021-72

**To:** Tenant Services Committee ("TSC")

**From:** Sheila Penny, Chief Operating Officer

**Date:** October 31, 2021

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an update on Toronto Community Housing ("TCHC") community programs delivered for children and youth in Summer 2021.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information.

### **BACKGROUND**

TCHC has made an ongoing commitment to our tenants to provide quality programs and services. In addition to delivering ongoing quality programming and support through our Tenant Engagement System and Community Action Plans, TCHC develops and implements innovative tenant programs. These programs are often offered through third-party partnerships, directly delivered by TCHC or a combination of service delivery. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed TCHC to reimagine how to empower tenants and deliver tenant programs.

### ***Partnerships and Sponsors***

To provide programs for tenants, TCHC works with community partners through space partnerships, referral agreements, and community-level service delivery. As outlined in TCHC's Collaboration Strategy, *"TCHC collaborations will be tenant-facing and have relevant and measurable indicators that show whether the collaboration is meeting the stated goals. Partners will be held accountable for meeting agreed-upon goals. TCHC will strive to ensure that costs associated with the collaboration are weighed against the benefit for tenants and the corporation."*

TCHC works with partners, tenants and staff to establish clear objectives and outcomes of their initiatives. Collaborations are documented and agreed upon by both parties. Partners are expected to maintain consistent reporting and communication with TCHC to ensure they are meeting project deliverables. For summer 2021, TCHC partnered with tenants and community members to provide a range of COVID-modified children and youth programs and services.

### **Overview of Youth Summer Programs – Q3**

#### ***Rookie League***

In partnership with the Jays Care Foundation, Rookie League is a baseball development summer camp for children and youth living in TCHC priority neighbourhoods across the city. Rookie League is designed to enable parents and caregivers to feel confident that their children are safe, surrounded by well-trained and inspiring role models, and engaging in activities to help them learn essential life skills. The 2021 season of Rookie League was implemented using a hybrid approach that allowed families to select virtual or in-person camps. The theme for this year's Rookie League was *"Come Back Stronger"*, aimed at identifying and building on the resilience of TCHC children and youth. A program survey conducted showed that 91% of parents believed that Rookie League had positively impacted their child's recovery from the effects of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. As a result, the 2021 Rookie League season has once again delivered an impactful camp experience for campers and their families.

***In-person Rookie League Parent Feedback:***

*“This is my son's first time in camp, and I was so scared of the unknown, but to my surprise, he loved every moment. He loves all the camp leaders; they are so patient with him and allow him to talk their ears off. I'm so happy for this opportunity.”*

Location	Number of Participants
Various locations in the East Region, West Region and Central Region	Virtual: 757 In-person: 925

***Youthworx***

YouthWorx was first implemented in July-October 2013 in various TCHC communities. The program is geared towards improving outcomes for youth by engaging them in economic activities and skills development. YouthWorx focuses on employing young people in July and August in various small-scale labour jobs, including community clean-ups, light repair jobs, community gardening and beautification, cleaning signs, and painting. Youth Community Workers are hired for eight weeks during July and August. In addition to employment, youth are also provided with the opportunity to enhance their capacity in employment-related, personal, professional and leadership areas of growth. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the YouthWorx Program operated at 70% capacity to ensure that participants and staff could adhere to proper social distancing protocols.

Although Youthworx operated at a 70% capacity this year, the program was a success as it helped expand participants' connection to their community and peers while providing them with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and skills. For many of the youth workers, this was their first job. Over 90% of those surveyed stated that this program helped move them closer to their employment and career goals. Amid an uncertain COVID-19 environment, 81 % of our young people felt that Youthworx enabled them to feel a stronger sense of belonging to their community; as well, they enjoyed going into the communities and putting smiles on residents' faces, and help to clean up their neighbourhood.

**Participant A:** "My favourite part of youthworx is the skills that I gained like money management and how to interact with various individuals in a professional manner."

**Participant B:** "Meeting and making new friends and building new relationships with program coordinators."

Location	Number of Participants
East Region, West Region and Central Region	63

### **Be.Build.Brand (B3)**

Be.Build.Brand is a 10-week entrepreneurship program for TCHC tenants between the ages of 18 and 29. The program supports entrepreneurial ideas in the pre-incubation stage and helps participants turn their ideas into viable business plans. The program offers exposure to relevant entrepreneurship content, industry guest speakers, and capacity-building opportunities. Participants get the chance to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges for a chance to win seed funds for their business venture. Scotiabank donated this year's pitch prize. The spring/summer B3 cohort has helped 83% of program participants move closer towards achieving their employment, entrepreneurship, and career goals compared to when they first started the program. This year's spring/summer cohort of B3 was held virtually due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Location	Number of Participants
East Region, West Region and Central Region	16

### **Internship**

TCHC's Youth Internship Program was created to test experiences, allow TCHC youth to meet professionals in different fields, and develop experience for youth to discover their passion and unlock their potential. Internships and training opportunities enable youth to develop skills and interests through meaningful opportunities that may lead to careers providing financial stability and ongoing professional

development. TCHC Internships are typically twelve-week paid opportunities offered in a summer and fall cohort. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Internship program was held online.

This summer Interns walked away with invaluable skills (e.g. project management, teamwork, networking, etc.) and experience to assist them with their professional and personal goals. 60% of those surveyed as part of the summer cohort had 1-2 years of experience in their career field, with 89 % having a university degree as their highest level of education. Some of the most enjoyable parts of their internship experience included; our weekly professional development sessions, learning from TCHC managers and receiving guidance in their career field. 100% of survey respondents indicated that they would work for TCHC permanently if given the opportunity, which speaks to the value of our internship program and other options that we create to provide tenants first-hand exposure to the working world.

***Xavier Broux - Corp & Internal Communications Intern***

*"I've made a lot of connections because of this internship opportunity. Overall it was a great experience. I've had several interviews and received a few job offers because of this internship. The PD sessions were helpful and related to things I was going through"*

Location	Number of Participants
East Region, West Region and Central Region	33

***Central Program Highlight:***

***Moss Park***

In partnership with The Kick Back Foundation and Puma, TCHC is refurbishing the Moss Park Basketball Court. Members of the Kickback have a lived experience of the area and approached TCHC to engage in this corporate sponsorship that added resources to already scheduled capital work at the site. A plan for collaborative local programming will be used to animate and support the long-term sustainability of the revitalized court. Over three years, The KickBack

Foundation and Puma will be investing more than \$100,000 in Community Economic Development (“CED”) and Active Living-specific programming for youth residents. A first step in the collaboration saw a team of Youthworx participants assigned to Moss Park supporting the Kickback Foundation’s youth flag football program this past summer.

Location	Number of Participants
Central Region	100

### **SENIORS HOUSING UNIT UPDATE**

The Seniors Housing Unit (“SHU”) was able to coordinate onsite COVID-19 vaccinations across all 83 Seniors Housing Unit buildings offering all 14,000 tenants first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccinations began in March of 2021 and were completed by July 24, 2021. Key hospital partners included: Michael Garron Hospital, Baycrest, St. Joseph’s Health Centre & St. Michael’s, North York General, Sunnybrook and Humber River Regional Hospital. As well, essential health & social support partners included: LOFT Community Services, WoodGreen, SPRINT, Toronto Neighborhood Organization, Hong Fook and West Neighborhood House. TCHC also received volunteer support from Global Medic, UHN’s Friendly Neighbor initiative and The Canadian Red Cross.

Despite the use of space restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic, technology and digital literacy initiatives emerged as critical programs over the past nine months within the SHU. These include Toronto Public Library’s Tech Help program to connect seniors virtually to technology and digital literacy assistance that began early in 2021 and concluded in September. Over the last quarter, Baycrest initiated their connected seniors’ program within three buildings in the North East, focusing on educating individual tenants on how to use the internet and their devices to connect virtually to family, friends, health & social supports. WoodGreen also initiated outdoor social recreation activities in 3 of our buildings in the South East over the summer and early fall to offer tenants the opportunity for social interaction and exercise in a safe environment that allowed for adequate social distancing and maintaining our COVID-19 protocols.

In September, the SHU successfully hired a business planner to focus on partnership compliance and development, as a key part of their responsibilities. Work has begun to develop an inventory of programs and partnerships in conjunction with TCHC's Programs and Partnerships team and the Tenant Resolution Office. This inventory will include programs running prior to the COVID-19 closures and new initiatives across the SHU portfolio.

**NEXT STEPS:**

The range of programs implemented in during Q3 focused on connecting children, youth and seniors to critical medical, social, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. TCHC looks forward to continuing to offer a wide range of program options to the children, youth and seniors who call TCHC home for the remainder of 2021.

**SIGNATURE:**

*"Sheila Penny"*

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Sheila Penny  
Chief Operating Officer

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. Program Inventory

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### Attachment 1: Program Inventory

Program	Funding Source
VRP	Internal
Seniors Wellness	Internal
Be.Build.Brand. (B3)	Internal + 2021/2022 city of Toronto + 2021 Pitch Prizes from Scotiabank
Internship	Internal
Youthworx	Internal
Investing in Our Diversity Scholarship	External Donors
Gem Program	Internal
Rookie League	50/50 with Jays Cares
Home Run Scholars	50/50 with Jays Cares
Midnight Basketball	Internal
Kick Start	External MLSE
Gyms	Internal
Nike Basketball Academy	Nike
Head-stART	Internal
Love Music Initiative	Internal