



# Council Briefing Notes

Brought to you by CUPE Local 79

## CD23.1 - NEWCOMER YOUTH RECREATION FORUM

### Summary

CUPE Local 79 was honoured to participate in the Newcomer Youth Recreation Forum in June, where we presented our findings from interviews and surveys of our members in Toronto Recreation who work most closely with newcomer youth. The City's Youth Recreation Programmers, Youth Outreach Workers and Community Recreation Programmers have a deep understanding of how the City can better serve newcomer youth.

#### **Local 79 respectfully recommends that the Committee:**

Request staff to include CUPE Local 79 in any future consultations or discussions with respect to improving services for Toronto's newcomer youth.

### Discussion

The feedback we heard from our members through our interviews and surveys echoes the key learnings and recommendations summarized in the report. Our members' insights shed light on challenges experienced on the frontlines of these services while proposing effective solutions.

Specifically, our findings point to how to remove barriers to newcomer youth participation through improved program design and delivery, as well as outreach and registration processes.

Our members recommend enhancing staff training to:

- Provide cultural sensitivity training for instructors.
- Make training more consistent and use train the trainer models among staff.
- Provide customized training to reflect issues and knowledge needed to serve specific newcomer groups.

Our presentation of the results we provided at the forum is appended to this briefing note.

## CD23.2 - WAITLISTS FOR SERVICE/PROGRAMS SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACCESSING RECREATION SERVICES

### Summary

Local 79 fully supports the Division's strategy to develop a plan for growing service provision of recreation programs.

As part of the labour-management process, Local 79 recently brought forward concerns to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation about the provision of adaptive services in recreation facilities and summer camps. Local 79 heard from Camp Counsellors who provide service in Adapted Recreation Programs that they are often unable to take breaks or receive program support from staff not trained in adaptive service provision because those staff are uncomfortable providing assistance. Recreation Workers told us they are not informed about the City policy on requests for adaptive services, for example at City pools. In order to facilitate greater participation in City of Toronto recreation programs, staff are requesting that adaptive training be provided to increase their skills and ability to assist patrons.

### Local 79 respectfully recommends that the Committee:

Direct staff to include the following elements with respect to supporting individuals with disabilities in the Community Recreation Growth and Waitlist Management Plan:

1. A policy for accommodating patron requests for adaptive assistance at City facilities.
2. A plan for training recreation staff who do not provide service in an adaptive service program, to better assist patrons accessing general recreation programs.
3. A strategy for supporting Camp Counsellors who deliver services in the adapted programs.
4. An update on any plans for accessibility upgrades at City recreation sites.

## CD23.5 - CHILD CARE GROWTH STRATEGY – PHASE ONE IMPLEMENTATION (2017 – 2019)

### Summary

The Child Care Growth Strategy – Phase I Implementation Plan is an assertive first step in achieving the City's long-term goals of growth, affordability and a thriving workforce in child care. While the Plan outlines new funding from all levels of government, it also highlights immediate funding pressures and the need for year-over-year commitments to meet the Strategy's 2026 targets.

Phase I requires approval of an \$11.2 million investment as part of the 2018 City budget process. This

funding must be prioritized, and not at the cost of existing programs, staff or services. As Divisional budgets are flat-lined and workload continues to be a top issue for Local 79 members, Children's Services cannot afford cuts in existing areas to subsidize new initiatives.

**Local 79 respectfully recommends that the Committee:**

1. Adopt the Phase I Implementation Plan.
2. Prioritize funding for its Child Care Growth Strategy as part of its long-term financial plan, and adopt, in principle, the proposed investment of \$11.2 million as part of the 2018 Children's Services budget.
3. Include in the Child Care Growth Strategy, and as part of the City's Asset Management Strategy, a review of facilities that could accommodate new, publicly operated child care spaces to support long-term growth and demand.
4. Ensure workforce strategies under the Child Care Growth Strategy are aligned with the objectives of the City's decent work standards and poverty reduction strategy.

## **Background**

Consistent, long-term investments are needed to simultaneously address affordability and capacity over the next ten years. There are currently 8,213 children on the fee subsidy waitlist in the birth to age four group, and one in four children in Toronto living in poverty.

Affordability remains a significant barrier to accessing childcare. As Provincial investments for 2018 and 2019 of the Phase I Implementation have not yet been confirmed, the City must commit to its share of the plan's full funding requirement in the 2018 Budget process so it can better plan and keep pace with service needs.

The Childcare Growth Strategy should also include a review of City-owned facilities for child care expansion, especially in high need areas. The City of Toronto has one of the largest real estate portfolios in Canada, and achieving the strategy's goal of creating 30,000 new spaces by 2026 should not rest solely on the shoulders of the sector.

As the system grows and expands, workforce pressures need to be considered. It is reassuring that the staff report recognizes the importance of building a thriving workforce where "investments in salaries are also investments in affordability." Local 79 supports the Children's Services proposal to develop a formal salary expectation for programs that it funds and encourage operators to direct funds to increasing RECE salaries. According to the University of Toronto study commissioned by Children's Services, 75% of RECE workers are below the hourly wage threshold established by the Ministry of Education.

Improvements to child care workers' employment conditions have a positive impact on the quality of children's learning environment. Workforce strategies should be aligned with the City's broader efforts to develop decent work standards. These standards will ensure everyone doing business with

the City makes a living wage, and will support poverty reduction and reduction of precarious working conditions. Child care workers should be afforded the same respect in their employment standards.

## CD23.6 - TORONTO EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE SERVICES (TELCCS) PROJECTED CENTRE CLOSURES 2018

Two Childcare Centres — Davisville ELCC (Ward 22) and Lawrence East ELCCC (Ward 43) — are projected to close in 2018. Davisville is being closed as the Davisville Junior Public School in which it is located undergoes redevelopment. Lawrence East is closing in preparation for a larger and more suitable centre opening, but not until a year later.

Closing these Centres will reduce the City’s childcare capacity by 67 spaces for a period of time. When Centres are slated for closure, the City needs a concrete plan to ensure that the children currently receiving care will be moved to accessible, affordable, quality care nearby and that the closure will not result in increasing unmet demand for childcare in the area over the short, medium or long-term.

### Local 79 respectfully recommends that the Committee:

Request staff to report back before the 2018 budget on concrete plans to move children currently receiving care at Davisville ELCC (Ward 22) and Lawrence East ELCCC (Ward 43) into accessible, affordable, quality care nearby and ensure the closures will not result in increasing unmet demand for childcare in the area over the short, medium or long-term.

## CD23.10 - REVIEW AND IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES FOR TORONTO STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS STRATEGY 2020

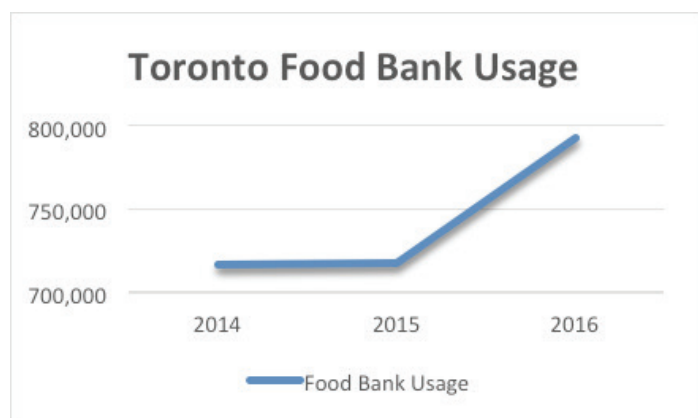
### Summary

Local 79 is pleased to support the recommendations in CD23.10. In particular, lowering the average number of neighbourhood planning tables that Community Development Officers work with will increase their ability to foster localized strategies to deal with complex and emerging community issues.

Furthermore, the addition of a community hub in Thorncliffe Park is a great opportunity to provide residents with the opportunity to access services from the City and from its community partners in a single, welcoming location.

### Discussion

Local 79 is proud of the work our members do to Take Care of Toronto, particularly since many of our members provide direct services



to communities through child care, recreation, shelter support and other front-line programs. These services are key to building strong, resilient neighbourhoods.

As Toronto's income inequality crisis continues to grow, these community-based services become increasingly important. We know, for example, that food bank usage is increasing in our city – people accessed food banks nearly 800,000 times last year. Many of Toronto's communities are being left behind despite Toronto's growing prosperity.

Community programming and services improve lives and mitigate this inequality. For example, this spring saw a 4.1% increase in drop-in attendance and 9.9% increase in the number of enrollments at community centres where programming is free. Clearly, these are valued programs.

## **CD23.12 - MANAGING REFUGEE FLOWS**

### **Summary**

CD23.12 is the most recent example of numerous commitments the City of Toronto has made to supporting newcomers, including refugees and refugee claimants. These include the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, which included the principles recommended in the Local 79 and Social Planning Toronto report "Creating Immigrant Friendly Cities," as well as reaffirmation of Toronto as a Sanctuary City.

Local 79 is pleased to support the recommendations in CD23.12, but once again urges the City to invest in shelters and to provide appropriate resources in the 2018 budget to fund the commitments made through its various strategies to support newcomers and reduce poverty.

### **Discussion**

The commitments presented in this report are admirable, but like so many aspects of poverty reduction, community building, and public health, implementation remains distressingly underfunded.

With respect to the impact of refugees on our shelter system, the report correctly points to the Federal Government's slow refugee claim processing and the Province's cap on funding for refugee shelters as contributors to budget over-expenditures and system strain. However, the fundamental problem with emergency shelters in our City is not an influx of refugees, but a generalized lack of capacity. Shelters are consistently above the 90% occupancy rate set by Council. In fact, shelter use by families increased 22% between Q1 and Q2 of this year. That puts Q2 shelter use at a deeply concerning 50.31% increase over last year.

### **For more information please contact:**

Angie Conte [aconte@cupelocal79.org](mailto:aconte@cupelocal79.org) (416-977-1629 ext. 229) (CD 23.2 & CD 23.5)

Chris Samuel [csamuel@cupelocal79.org](mailto:csamuel@cupelocal79.org) (416-977-1629 ext. 312) (CD 23.10 & CD 23.12)

Katrina Miller [kmiller@cupelocal79.org](mailto:kmiller@cupelocal79.org) (416-977-1629 ext. 247) (CD 23.1 & CD 23.6)