

CD22.1.4

Community Development and Recreation Committee
City of Toronto

June 26, 2013

Re: June 26, 2013 meeting - agenda item CD22.1 – Recreation Service Plan Implementation Plan

Dear Committee Members,

She Moves Toronto began as a simple \$5000.00 research project funded by the Heart and Stroke foundation's Spark Advocacy grant, which explored the issue of accessibility of recreation facilities. A group of young women, a part of Scadding Court Community Centre's Young Muslim program, began doing research within and around their community with regards to barriers that minority women face when trying to access these facilities. Examples of such barriers include a lack of privacy in change rooms, a lack of female-only staff in pools and other recreation facilities, the lack of services, a lack of women's-only hours for recreation that are accessible and a lack of consistent staff knowledge of gender-specific policies. Taking these factors into account the group started a basketball league at University Settlement that eliminated these barriers. This league began and ended with 50 young female participants, which was beyond University Settlement, along with She Moves' expectations. This gave insight into not necessarily a lack of existing recreational facilities but rather a lack of accessibility for diverse women in the city.

The group took it a step further and applied for part two of this accessibility research grant and received approximately \$30,000.00. Here our main goal is not to start programs like that of the first grant, rather penetrate the root of the problems within the city of Toronto. With this grant, we have thus far conducted outreach to many different female youth groups within the city that may share the same barriers that we have previously researched. We also, conducted research with regards to city of Toronto funded facilities to monitor any recurrent factors leading to low female minority attendance.

We know that if changes are made within these facilities, a positive impact can occur. For instance, Regent Park, as part of its revitalization process, created an aquatic centre that minimized the many barriers faced by the marginalized residents. This included female hours that were appropriate to the community (Saturday evenings), female staff, appropriate changing areas and windows that do not expose swimmers. We know that these changes have been positive, as many marginalized and racialized youth along with many adults have and continue to use this recreation center.

With the implementation of the Recreation Services plan, many of the goals and objectives intersect with She Moves' ideals and mandate. We are concerned, however, that there needs to be a firm commitment from the City of Toronto on how they will ensure that underserved groups are able to access recreation services. We feel that our input would be of great interest to the implementation strategy and hope we can work together to create accessibility for all.

Thank you for your consideration.



IF YOU WANT TO MOVE WITH SHEMOVES
THEN CONTACT US



FACEBOOK.COM/SHEMOVES TORONTO
TWITTER.COM/SHEMOVES TORONTO
SHEMOVES TORONTO@GMAIL.COM



2013 JUN 27 AM 11:13
CITY OF TORONTO
SECRETARY'S OFFICE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RECREATION