

Let's Get Physical

My friend Zo is a big 80's music fan and no doubt images of Olivia Newton John will pop up with that headline. Aside from the title of an iconic 1980's tune, the phrase came to me after getting one of Julia Sippel's very informative emails about happenings in the Township (if you are not on the Township email blast list then contact Julia at the Township office and give her your email address to get added – jsippel@northdumfries.ca).

We want an active community. An active, healthy community benefits us all. The Township should and can assist in providing opportunities for residents to find a variety of activities that they can participate in. Whether it is on our trails, in our various parks or at the Complex, a community that provides a variety of activities is a desirable community; it attracts development and positive growth.

Julia's email informed us about Children and Seniors programs. I was very pleased to read about the level of programming that was being developed. There was information about a free Monkeynastix demo class. I had never heard of Monkeynastix but judging by the response on the Township Facebook page ("Township of North Dumfries") it is well known and hopefully the demo class will be well attended. It looks like a wonderful program for the toddlers. The email also talked about Children programs at the Ayr Branch Library beginning mid January and going into March. It's great to see our Ayr Library Branch getting very active in the community and providing programming for children of all ages.

The last item in the email really caught my attention. It is the Seniors Walking Club that is being developed by Michelle Poissant. Michelle is our Community Outreach Coordinator. This is a new position that council created last year. Michelle has done a wonderful job in developing links with individuals and community groups in the Township. She is on the forefront of the Township goal of getting more involved in our community and working with groups and individuals to develop more programming for all ages in the Township. The Seniors Walking Club is a great idea to tie activity on the Heritage Walking Track with the Seniors Lounge at the Complex. The Club starts on Wednesday January 11 at 9am at the Complex.

The Heritage Walking Track has been getting great use. I have seen many people out taking advantage of this opportunity. Errol and Karen Ramdoo are frequent walkers who I bump in to quite often. Errol even incorporates the stairs into his walks. I saw Reg and Kate Cressman recently who completed 3km (15 laps) while watching their grandson at the rink. The Township is waiting to hear about our application to the Trillium Foundation for a grant towards flooring for the walking track. We need to get flooring for the track.

The recently created Recreation and Trails Advisory Citizens Committee is meeting on a regular basis to assist the Township in developing programming ideas. This group will be looking at a wide range of recreational options throughout the Township. The committee has been looking at trails through the Township. One potential trail of interest is in the Branchton area to connect to the Rail Trail. The committee is considering opportunities with the Nith River including canoeing and a canoe launch. That is the type of creativity that the Township hopes and wants to develop. We have wonderful facilities, natural and man-made and impressive people in our community who want to give back. We look forward to seeing the concepts that are developed from the committee.

The Township will continue to look at developing activities for all age groups. One age group where we need to develop more programming is for our teens. Those in the 13 to 18 age group. We need to find activities to provide positive opportunities for this group. Our local library is doing its part with the development of Teen Avenue at the library. Soon, we will have an official opening for our Youth Room at the Complex, sponsored by the Lyle Hallman Foundation. This room is a partnership with the North Dumfries Community Health Centre. Nancy DiPietro, the Nurse Manager at the NDCHC, has coordinated the purchase of new furniture along with a ping pong table, large screen TVs and gaming systems. This is a start and a good start. We hope to do more by engaging our youth and hearing from them on what they would like to see developed in our community.

There is a lot happening in your Township. Get connected, get involved, let's work together to continue to develop an active, healthy and positive community. And to Errol, Karen, Reg and Kate, and all the others, keep on walking, it's great to hear these stories and see the activity.

Rob Deutschmann
Mayor, North Dumfries Township.