

Newcomers to Aurora will get a feel of Town through new Bus Tour program



It's always tough moving to a new place, but Aurora will help ease the experience for older international newcomers to Canada through a new bus tour program that got a boost from the Provincial Government on Friday morning.

At the Aurora Seniors' Centre on October 20, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy announced the Province is contributing \$14,450 to the Welcome to Aurora Bus Tour Program.

"This is a collaboration with the Centre for Immigration and Community Services and is designed to increase older adults' awareness of how to identify, report and prevent elder abuse and fraud, reduce isolation and increase volunteerism. This, all while touring around our great Town," said MPP Gallagher Murphy.

"To help get this program off to a great start, I am pleased to announce our government is providing a grant through the Seniors Community Grant Program of more than \$14,000. The purpose of [the grant] is it keeps seniors fit, healthy, active and socially connected, and close to their homes. This is a great thing because we all live in this area [and] being connected doing your socialization close to home is a big benefit. This is why each year Ontario provides hundreds of Seniors Community Grants to support community groups across this great Province. These investments support local not-for-profit community organizations, municipalities like the Town of Aurora, and it also supports Indigenous groups as well."

The MPP said she was "excited" that this money was coming to the local program and said the fact that the service is being provided in the language of the newcomer sets it apart.

"It's a huge service for newcomers to a country," she said. "Now the tour will include visits to many of our Aurora municipal sites like the Aurora Fire Halls, Public Library, the Seniors' Centre right here, and Town Hall and to York Regional Police. This truly is a great service for new Canadians arriving in Aurora."

This enthusiasm was also shared by Mayor Tom Mrakas.

"We know that coming to a new country can often be challenging and overwhelming," he said. "What this bus tour does is make that transition a bit smoother by welcoming newcomers to our community in a meaningful way and connecting them to the resources, information and support they need to thrive in Canada."

"Throughout the bus tours, newcomers will learn about so many great programs throughout Aurora in their own language, which will help them stay active and engaged. Of course, I also want to thank our partners for the Centre for Immigrant and Community

Services for helping us put on this program and our wonderful staff, not only throughout the entire town of Aurora but right here at the Seniors Centre for all the work they have done to come up with these programs. As well as the great organizations that are part of the tour, including the Aurora Seniors' Centre, Aurora Public Library, York Regional police, CYFS, and Community & Home Assistance to Seniors.?

Bus tours, which are slated to hit the road next month, will include the Seniors' Centre, the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Town Hall, Central York Fire Services (CYFS) Station 4-5, while presentations will be delivered by the York Regional Police, the CYFS, Aurora Public Library, CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors) on subjects including fire safety, emergency preparedness, municipal services, recreation programs, fraud prevention, and individual support services available in the community.

The Town expects 90 newcomers to take part in two November tours.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter