

Half-million grant will help kids get healthy

By Brock Weir

The Province of Ontario has over half a million reasons to encourage Aurora kids to keep healthy.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has responded to an application by the Town of Aurora and numerous community partners under their ?Healthy Kids Community Challenge? with a grant of \$525,000.

According to a report before Council this week, the Challenge will foster community-led programs to promote health and combat childhood obesity.

?The Challenge is a community-led program where partners from different sectors work together to implement activities to promote healthy weights for kids,? said Laura Sheardown, Financial Analyst for the Town of Aurora. ?Under the leadership of the municipality, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will provide funding and direction to implement local activities based on one specific theme related to healthy eating, physical activity and adequate sleep. The selected themes address the risk or protective factors that are known to lead to or prevent childhood obesity.?

Last year, Aurora presented its grant application to the Province alongside York Region Public Health, both the public and Catholic School Boards, York Region Food Network, Windfall Ecology Centre, Longo's, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Hike Ontario and Neighbourhood Network. The application was approved in September of 2014, but the amount was determined just last week.

The money will be spread over three years.