

Keeping fit a ?walk in the park? for Seniors? Centre members



Keeping fit has never been easier for members of the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

On Thursday, the Centre received a grant of just over \$8,800 from the Ontario Minister for Seniors & Accessibility.

Joined by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillors Rachel Gilliland (Ward 2) and John Gallo (Ward 5), the Minister visited the Centre on a busy day, where everything from ping pong to woodworking was running, underscoring the Centre's many activities that keep older members of the community active and engaged.

But last week was all about the Walking Club.

The Walking Club, which runs every Tuesday from October through March, is based out of the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Industrial Parkway North. Participants begin their session with a 20-minute walk on the Complex's walking track. Following a cool down, the program includes educational seminars on a variety of topics of interest to seniors.

Last week's funding announcement will support the program through the purchase of an iPad, projector and screen for the educational seminars, as well as supplies to keep seniors happy and hydrated while getting in their steps ? including water bottles.

?We must keep seniors connected and active,? said Minister Cho. ?We must end social isolation. For seniors, social isolation is Enemy #1. I am one of the lucky seniors because I have a job, I'm a Senior Minister, and I go around with so many wonderful people ? but [for] seniors who do not have that connection and isolation, it's very risky, many of them become depressed?and that's why the Senior Community Grant is so important.?

This was a sentiment shared by MPP Gallagher Murphy, who said the grant would have an impact on 125 older adults in the community.

?It will create a weekly walking club and deliver educational seminars in partnership with York Regional Police, the Alzheimer Society, and the Community & Home Assistance to Seniors, better known here in the community as CHATS,? she said. ?It is recipients like the Town of Aurora that ensure Ontario's seniors remain a part of our community where services and programs that are tailored to meet their unique needs. These programs focus on strengthening our senior safety and wellbeing while promoting opportunities for older adults and seniors to network. As Minister Cho has noted, combatting social isolation is a big issue. This is why we need to make sure that all of our older adults stay connected to friends, family, and our community members while they're

living well at home in our community.?

Joining them at the podium, Mayor Mrakas said it was an ?important investment? that will make a difference.

?This funding will help us strengthen programs we offer older adults, specifically our very popular and successful Walking Club,? he said. ?What I love so much about our Walking Club is it provides an easy and accessible way for older adults to stay active and healthy, while also fostering connections and new friendships between people of different backgrounds and experiences. That is really at the heart of the mission of our Seniors' Centre and the incredible staff who work here, supporting older residents and building a real sense of community through incredible programming.

?I want to thank Minister Cho, MPP Gallagher Murphy and the Ontario Government for this funding and for their commitment to improving the quality of life for Aurora residents. Here at the Town, we are committed to supporting our older residents and helping them stay active and engaged. We will continue to strengthen our programs in the months and years to come.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter