SUBJECT: STAR Emergency One-Time Request – 2005 Community Partnership Program (GRA05008)(City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the one-time emergency request for the STAR program in the amount of $10,000 be funded through the 2005 Community Partnership unallocated and reserve accounts.

Joseph L. Rinaldo, General Manager
Finance and Corporate Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Since 1989 the Skills Training and Recreation Program (STAR) has provided skill based sports and educational programs for at risk children and youth aged 5 to 15. To enhance access to the programs, the STAR program is delivered through units in three social housing sites in the east end of the City of Hamilton.

Due to the organization’s current financial crisis, the STAR program is requesting a one-time emergency Community Partnership Program allocation for $10,000. The provision of these funds will allow STAR to continue to operate programs at its current three social housing sites will also providing them time to complete their strategic plan and renewal strategy.
SUBJECT: STAR Emergency One-Time Request – 2005 Community Partnership Program (GRA05008)(City Wide - Page 2 of 3)

BACKGROUND:

Since 1989 the Skills Training and Recreation Program (STAR) has provided skill based sports and educational programs for at risk children and youth aged 5 to 15. To enhance access to the programs, the STAR program is delivered through units in three social housing sites in the east end of the City of Hamilton.

The STAR program received $15,000 from the Region’s former grant program in 1999 and was then funded from the National Child Benefit program from (need figs).

Current Situation:

Throughout 2004/2005, the organization has faced significant financial challenges in trying to keep the STAR program viable five nights a week at the three sites (Oriole Crescent, Congress Court and Barton/Kenora). Combined with the financial challenges, the organization has had a change in leadership at the Board level.

In order to keep the programs open, the Board has reduced the level of service at the three sites. Two of the sites now operate two nights per week (Oriole Crescent and Congress Court), while service has been reduced to one night per week at the Barton/Kenora site. The decision to extend the programs to five nights per week at all three sites is contingent upon financing.

To address the organizational capacity issues, the Board has elected a number of new Board members and also has enlisted the assistance of a number of community “consultants”.¹ They have also enlisted the services of volunteer consultants from the United Way’s Leadership Development Program to assist them with the development of a strategic plan. It is anticipated that the STAR strategic plan will be completed by November 30, 2005.

Emergency One-Time Request:

Even with the measures undertaken to date, the STAR program is facing the prospect of discontinuing its programs until other funding sources are secured. To avoid this situation, STAR has requested a $10,000 one-time emergency funding request from the Community Partnership Program. The provision of these funds will ensure that the programs will remain open until April 2006. At which time, the new strategic plan would have been completed and the organization will be in a better position to determine the future viability of the program.

¹ Community consultants include: Social Planning & Research Council, CATCH, East Kiwanis, Hamilton Community Foundation, Hamilton Police Services and the City of Hamilton (Public Health & Community Services – Housing).
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ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES:

If the Grants Sub-Committee/Council determine that the emergency one-time request for STAR should not be granted, it is likely that all programs would cease by the end of October, 2005.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

This is a one-time emergency request. At the present time there is $5,012 remaining in the unallocated 2005 Community Partnership Program Budget and $16,293 available in the reserves. If the total $10,000 were to be granted, this would eliminate the balance in the unallocated 2005 Community Partnership Program budget and draw down the reserves an additional $4,988 leaving a balance of $11,305.

It is important to note that if this emergency one-time funding is approved, that a future Community Partnership Program grant is not a guarantee.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

This application was reviewed in compliance with the 2005 Community Partnership Program Policies and Procedures.

CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES:

This report was completed in consultation with the Grant Technical Team.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

The provision of a one-time emergency allocation to the STAR program assists the City of Hamilton to achieve its goal of being a great city in which to live. The STAR program provides recreational opportunities to at-risk children and youth who might not otherwise have the opportunity to develop these skills. The goals of the STAR program are also consistent with the Social Development Strategy that identify the need to reduce barriers to participation in community life for all citizens and promote the concept of equal access.