



**2012 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
Category Worksheet**

PARTNERSHIPS

Name of Local Government: District of Clearwater

Project/Program Title: Community Outreach / Living Well Program

Project Summary Paragraph

Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less.

As a newly incorporated municipality in 2009 the District of Clearwater obtained a grant through UBCM's Community Health Program Fund. Through this funding a Living Well Program was developed, during the duration of the program it was identified that the Program provided a great opportunity for the District of Clearwater to engage in community capacity building in an innovative way - through health and wellness.

Relationships with various community organizations were formed through the development of the Living Well Program – key stakeholders such as Interior Health, Community Resource Centre, and Yellowhead Community Services came together with a common goal. It was through these relationships that the District gained the insight that through the Community Links Program the Clearwater Secondary School was searching for increased health and recreational opportunities for their students. Conversations began in November of 2011 with an idea to collaborate on a program that would address the physical and emotional health, fitness and recreational needs of the entire community including the youth with a school specific focus. In November of 2011 a presentation was made to Council to join forces and a funding commitment to move the program forward in a collaborative partnership to develop the Community Outreach / Living Well Program.

Project Analysis

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked.

1. OBJECTIVE

Please explain the decision-making and thought process behind your decision to take on this initiative.

Through discussions it became clear that the District of Clearwater and Clearwater Secondary School needed to pool their resources, funding and use of facilities. The vision was to establish a collaborative partnership to develop a comprehensive program that would create a new way of service delivery for health, fitness and recreation programs, including new initiatives and events around lifestyle choices.

The objective of the Community Outreach / Living Well initiative is to create cost effective solutions (economies of scale) in the delivery of the Community Links (Clearwater Secondary

School program) and the Living Well (District of Clearwater program) in an organized approach providing programs and services to the citizens of all ages and stages of life.

In order to provide increased opportunities and to encourage and promote healthy lifestyle choices for people of all ages and stages of life a partnership was formed. The partnership grew to include Yellowhead Community Services, Ministry of Children and Families, the School District and continues to explore opportunities for new partners, most recently securing the Thompson Nicola Cariboo United Way as a new collaborative partner.

2. CHALLENGES

Please provide examples of challenges you faced in taking on this program/project and how you overcame them.

Getting buy in to the new service delivery concept from local government was an initial challenge. The CAO, Principal and Coordinator worked together to present the concept of marrying of the Community Outreach / Living Well Program with the following results: the Council agreed on a trial basis to partner in a pilot with resources and funding, the pilot ended in February. Through demonstration of the success through statistics, support letters and anecdotes the Council committed to a further 6 months. The utilization of space for organized recreational opportunities is a challenge for many rural municipalities, Clearwater is no different. With many of the programs needing the use of a gymnasium or multipurpose room developing a partnership with Clearwater Secondary School proved to be an asset. The space was easily accessible, central to the community and open five days per week. However, to keep the program fees affordable for all community members the rental fees for the School District facilities posed our largest challenge.

As there are no alternatives, the shared use of schools in our small rural community is essential to the existence of the Community Outreach / Living Well Programs success. The District of Clearwater is currently developing a proposal with School District No. 73 to enter into a Shared Use Agreement that would allow the community program to continue to use school facilities at a reduced rental rate. The Program Coordinator has also submitted an application for funds through the Wells Gray Community Forest to help subsidize School District rental fees to continue to operate various recreational & healthy living programs, in turn making them more affordable for all citizens. Our goal is to continue to offset some of the rental fees which keeps the program costs to a minimum and encourages more community members to make healthier choices to become more physically active by making programs more feasible for participants.

3. BENEFITS

Please provide examples of how this program/project benefited the community.

The Community Outreach / Living Well Program is consistently building on community capacity to help strengthen the growth and development of our community. Since the programs' inception in November of 2011 we have offered a total of 44 registered and drop in programs for community members of all ages and stages of life. It has become one of the most popular community programs in Clearwater with an overall total of 641 registered and drop in participants from November to July. There have also been 806 students, residents and community agencies participate in events and initiatives developed through this partnership. All these programs, initiatives and events would not have existed if there was no collaborative partnership to develop and bring this program to fruition. (Population of 2331)

Through this program the Coordinator applied for and was successful at securing various miscellaneous grants for community events. This includes; **\$1,500 TRU United Way Youth**

Initiative Grant to develop and coordinate Youth Week Celebrations - 238 participants, **\$300 grant BCRPA and BC Healthy Families, for Move for Health Day** - 194 participants and **\$200 grant Interior Health Authority for a National Non-Smoking Awareness Campaign** - 67 participants. We also received \$1,600 in sponsorship and prize donations from local business and organizations, this type of community buy in has been an added bonus to the program. Our most recent success is securing a collaborative partnership with the **Thompson Nicola Cariboo United Way for \$5000** to continue the enhancement of the program.

Staff has also engaged in talks with School District No.73 and Clearwater Secondary School Principal regarding the creation of a Shared Use Agreement between the District of Clearwater and the School District No. 73. This agreement would allow for programs to continue out of the school at a subsidized rental rate ensuring affordable program fees for all community members and the continual use of community assets.

With these partnerships this program has now morphed into an established Community Recreation, Healthy Living program.

4. INNOVATION

Tell us why you consider this project/program to be an innovative and/or creative initiative.

The Community Outreach / Living Well programs are two programs married together to provide the ultimate benefit of offering a variety of programs to youth, adults, and seniors through the joint use of one Coordinator and school facilities.

The District of Clearwater is very proud of the success and the impact the Community Outreach / Living Well Program has made on our community. The need for this program continues to grow and strengthen. This could not have happened if this collaborative partnership providing the understanding of each other's needs did not exist. Partners addressed the community need for physical and emotional health, fitness and recreation programs by thinking outside the box. Through a community needs assessment we were able to assess potential partners that could contribute resources and funding to help make this program a reality.

Our innovation stems from the goal to create a partnership unlike any other partnerships in our community. Our openness to work collaboratively with a number of local organizations who expressed the same commitment to community and buy in to the program has only enhanced the success of the partnership. The strength in our relationships with these organizations fostered by the marrying of the Community Outreach / Living Well Program will shape future Council policy. As a newly incorporated community, Clearwater is still in the process of developing policy and shaping the organization to meet community needs. The key philosophies guiding this collaborative program are the same used by Council when making decisions: Is this sustainable, how can we do more with less, how do we involve diverse partners for increased commitment, does this initiative increase community activity and engagement and is it accessible for **all members** of the community. The success of the Community Outreach / Living Well Program can be attributed to our ability to incorporate these key philosophies into the daily operation of the program.

5. GOALS

What did you set out to accomplish with the program/project? How effectively did you meet your goals?

As a collaborative program the Coordinator and Advisory Committee continuously works to ensure that we achieve a variety of program goals. Our goal is to strengthen and improve the wellness of our community in a holistic manner and provide more opportunities for citizens of all ages and stages of life in making healthier lifestyle choices. This has been met effectively by providing 44 registered or drop-in programs for physical and emotional health, fitness and recreation in 9 months (since inception). The programs seasonal participation levels have raised from 66 participants in the Fall to 350 participants this past Spring.

Through continued collaboration with local agencies and services such as; Interior Health Authority, Yellowhead Community Services and the Ministry of Children and Family Development we have been able to provide programs and events such as our Wellness Workshop Day, National Non-Smoking Awareness Week activities and Nutritional Grocery Shopping Tours and more. This collaboration has allowed us to meet our goal of building and strengthening our community capacity approach.

As more and more participants are utilizing the school for programs, Clearwater Secondary School has reported an increase in school involvement amongst parents and students. Parents are becoming more comfortable within the school due to the familiarity with the staff and facility while students are enhancing social and emotional learning while feeling a sense of community connectedness and belonging. The increase of programs within the school has assisted school staff with the development of initiatives addressing education and awareness of current student health, wellness, social and emotional issues. This has helped to achieve our goal in moving towards holistic wellness.

We have created centralized hub of community activity with the increased utilization of grass fields, community ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, the skateboard park, the curling rink, the arena and the library surrounding Clearwater Secondary School; a goal to utilize community facilities to their full potential.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of this initiative? (*e.g. staff time, resources, financial*)

The District of Clearwater clearly understands the impact the Community Outreach / Living Well Program has made to our community and has committed a portion of funding for the program expenses in the District's 5 Year Financial Plan. The District has now taken on the management role, overseeing the Program Coordinators responsibilities and working collectively with a newly formed Advisory Committee which includes School District and Municipal representatives. This commitment will provide an opportunity to further grow and strengthen program and increase revenues to be reinvested back into the program creating a sustainable future.

The development of a Shared Use agreement between the District of Clearwater and School District No. 73 outlines the commitment to the partnership over the long term. A further development of partnerships with United Way and the Wells Gray Community Forests provides for funds to grow the program into a long term commitment to the community under the umbrella of a Community Recreation Program.

Upon the completion of that second stage of the Community Outreach / Living Well program it was identified that there was a definite need to provide healthy living opportunities within the community on a long term permanent basis.

7. TRANSFERABILITY

How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

In a recent survey of 11 small rural communities it was found that Community Recreation was provided on a very limited, scattered non-committal basis. Sometimes offered through the Regional District, or private individuals or nonprofit organizations with no central place for community members to find out where or what is offered in the way of health, fitness or recreation programs. The prototype of Clearwater's Community Outreach / Living Well program can be used as a blueprint for other rural communities. Utilization of schools by community organizations in rural communities has gone by the wayside due to operational funding cuts, as is the limited tax dollars to run recreation programs in a municipality. The District of Clearwater has proof that working together towards a common goal fostering relationships with local organizations can enhance any potential program whether it is health, recreation or employment of instructors.

The program has made a small but recognizable increase to the economics in Clearwater. The program has increased job opportunities for locals by hiring community members to instruct programs. For instance we hired 5 contract instructors and 4 volunteers to teach programs. Those positions include hiring youth and exposing them to career opportunities in "Recreation Programming".

"In May 2011, the Ministry of Health launched a provincial strategy that aims at improving the health and well-being of all British Columbians and the communities they live in." The Community Outreach / Living Well program includes the four key focus areas of the Healthy Families BC program. These include proper nutrition, personal responsibility and investment in a healthy lifestyle, helping the most vulnerable families and encouraging Clearwater's citizens to lead healthier lifestyles. As healthier lifestyle choices have become an integral part of BC's communities, this collaborative recreation program is easily transferable to any local government.

8. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

Many other rural communities are faced with similar health, fitness and recreational challenges as Clearwater. There are potential program partners in any community. It takes vision and creative thinking to develop these possibilities.

This program provides excellence in partnerships, teamwork and economies of scale as we are all vying for the same dollar at the end of the day. The initial startup can be slow getting community buy-in from both the local School District and the Council. Being bold and having a clear vision with goals and objectives and a budget that works for all is essential. Including as many partners and or stakeholders from the start is a vital step to embarking on a similar project.

9. TELL US MORE

Please share any other information you think may help us better understand your submission.

The District of Clearwater has spent time surveying other communities (municipalities) of similar size, resource base and capacity to find out how community outreach and recreation programs are offered. There was nothing even close to what we have developed. With the creation of an Advisory Committee we have been able set a number of desired outcomes to occur from now until June 2013. With our continued partnership:

- We will be able to increase the number of health, fitness and recreational programs offered and participation levels by 15%.
- Our goal is to also develop an “**Everybody Gets to Play**” initiative that focuses on ensuring that economically disadvantaged children and families have access to quality leisure experiences.
- The program will finalize a Shared Use Agreement between School District No. 73 and the District of Clearwater. This agreement will provide an opportunity for community programs and user groups to utilize Clearwater Secondary, Raft River Elementary, community parks and the North Thompson Sportsplex at a subsidized rental fee. This agreement will help increase the facility usage amongst these buildings and improve community connectedness.
- We will also develop a “**Farm to School**” program where students build garden boxes and grow a vegetable garden to gain knowledge of the nutritional value of home grown foods and how they can be incorporated into the school foods and cafeteria program.
- The program will also work collaboratively with Clearwater’s Community Sports Coordinator and minor sports groups to encourage and ensure all youth have an opportunity to participant in a minor sport.
- Through this program the District has had the opportunity to bring Thompson Rivers University into program as a partner through the Community Recreation Brochure where all community activities: minor sports, recreation programming, University programming will be centralized into one publication for the citizens.

10. PARTNERS

- a.) Please list all the partners involved in this initiative.

Collaborative Partners & Advisory Committee Members:

District of Clearwater
Clearwater Secondary School
School District No. 73
Thompson Nicola Cariboo United Way
Wells Gray Community Forest Society (Pending)

Individual Program & Event Partners:

Raft River Elementary School
Clearwater Secondary PAC
Raft River Elementary PAC
Ministry of Children and Family Development
Yellowhead Community Services
Pharmasave
Evergreen Acres Society
Interior Health Authority
BCRPA & BC Healthy Families

- b.) Why did you choose to work with this/these particular partner(s)?

The District of Clearwater’s reasoning for choosing to work with these particular partners is simple:

1. Similar values and commitment to the community;
2. Understanding of the need to address the community's requests for increased opportunities for health, fitness and recreational programs;
3. Understanding of the value in improving the wellness of our community and the need to provide more opportunities for citizens to make healthier lifestyle choices to ensure that Clearwater is a healthy sustainable community;
4. They can provide facilities and resources to further enhance the program;
5. And make the most sense in the process of community capacity building.

UBCM