



## Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: July 2, 2025

Report Number: SRCS.25.09

Department: Community Services  
Division: Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: **SRCS.25.09 - 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program**

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### Purpose:

This report is to recommend projects to be awarded funds through the 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program.

### Recommendation(s):

- a) That staff report SRCS.25.09 be received.
- b) That Community and Cultural Grants totaling \$99,878 be provided to community and cultural organizations, and individual artists as follows:
  1. Aryton Spence, \$5,000
  2. Canadian Asian Heritage Association, \$5,000
  3. Canadian Literacy Association of Higher Education, \$5,000
  4. Canadian Senior Cooperation Association, \$2,625
  5. Carol Choi, \$5,000
  6. Community and Home Assistance for Seniors (CHATS), \$2,500
  7. Greg Chiykowski, \$662
  8. Hellenic Canadian Community of York, \$5,000
  9. High Notes Avante Productions, \$3,750
  10. ICTC Youth Foundation, \$5,000
  11. International Psychology Association of Canada, \$2,500
  12. Inventor Academy, \$5,000
  13. Katya Kuznetsova (Dance Together), \$5,000
  14. Luminis Choir, \$3,750
  15. Mastermind Dragon Robotic Inc, \$4,740
  16. Natasha Khan, \$2,550
  17. Play Forever, \$5,000
  18. Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra, \$2,625
  19. Richmond Hill Winter Carnival, \$2,500
  20. Shadowpath Theatre, \$4,250
  21. Shawn Heydari, \$3,700

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- 22. The Village of Richmond Hill BIA, \$5,000
- 23. Toronto Asian Arts Museum, \$5,000
- 24. Yellow Brick House, \$3,500
- 25. York Community Tamil Seniors Association, \$4,226
- 26. York South Family Network, \$1,000

### **Contact Person(s):**

Dan Di Ruscio, Manager Cultural Services, extension 5513

Donald Hearn, Director Recreation and Culture, extension 2503

Tracey Steele, Commissioner of Community Services, extension 2476

### **Report Approval:**

**Submitted by:** Tracey Steele, Commissioner of Community Services

**Approved by:** Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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### **Background:**

The Community and Cultural Grant Program (the “CCGP”) provides funding to community and cultural organizations and individual artists delivering programs, services and events that support Richmond Hill’s vision to be “a vibrant and inclusive city of neighbours.” A comprehensive outline of the CCGP is included in the attached 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program Guidelines (Appendix A).

Applicants may apply for funding to support initiatives occurring within a 12 month timeframe and can receive a maximum of 50 percent of their eligible expenses up to a maximum of \$5,000.

Since the CCGP was initiated in 2015, it has contributed funding to over 137 projects involving over 527 activities, 162,719 participants, and 6,891 volunteers.

In November 2024, Council approved revisions to the CCGP as outlined in SRCS.24.19. Updates to the CCGP for 2025 include new evaluation criteria reflecting the Strategic Plan vision, a simplified evaluation process, eligibility for annual programs, increase of the overall program budget from \$65,000 to \$100,000, and use of the Community Enhancement and Economic Vitality Reserve Fund as the program funding source.

### **2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program**

2025 CCGP applications were made available to the public on March 11, 2025, and an information session was held on March 25, 2025. The deadline to submit applications for the 2025 CCGP was April 13, 2025. The current cycle will fund projects taking place between June 2025 to June 2026.

A compiled database of community and cultural organizations and individual artists were notified about the 2025 intake by e-mail. The general public was made aware of the grant program application period via e-blasts, social media (including X (Twitter), Facebook and LinkedIn), and advertising on interior LCD boards and exterior LED signs at community centres.

A record number of 58 applications were received with a total request value of \$250,771.

### **Discussion:**

A review team comprised of three staff and three citizen members (Appendix B) reviewed and evaluated applications. Citizen members of the review team were recruited through a public call using the Recreation & Culture e-blast subscriber list and the City’s social media channels.

As outlined and approved by Council in November of 2024 (SRCS.24.19), the review team used a three-step process to evaluate applications. The first step was to determine applicant, project and expense eligibility. The second step involved ranking eligible projects according to their ability to meet the three program criteria of: capacity

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to increase vibrancy, the extent to which they were inclusive, and ability to bring people together and encourage connections. Finally, the results of the ranking evaluation were adjusted to prioritize applications submitted by Richmond Hill-based organizations or artists, and new projects that have not previously received funding.

As a result of the evaluation, it is recommended that the City award a total of \$99,878 to 26 projects that are listed with a brief project description in Appendix C.

Upon approval of the recommendations of this report, applicants will be contacted to inform them of the awards. Staff will follow-up with approved recipients throughout the period of their specific project and will ensure final project reports are submitted in accordance with expectations outlined in the CCGP Guidelines.

### **Financial Implications:**

The approved Community and Cultural Grant Program budget for 2025 is \$100,000 and the recommendation to award \$99,878 in grants is within the allotted budget.

### **Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:**

The Community and Cultural Grant Program relates to Pillar 2, Focusing on People. Specifically, it is consistent with Priority 2 “Supporting Richmond Hill’s unique character and sense of community through programs, services and events”, as it “facilitates programming and events for the community that foster connections between the City and residents, as well as among community members themselves.” Applicants to this program are specifically asked through the application form to explain in detail how their application aligns with the City’s Strategic Plan Vision Statement.

### **Attachments:**

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format, please call the contact person listed in this document.

Appendix A – 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program Guidelines

Appendix B – Community and Cultural Grant Program Review Team

Appendix C – 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Application Recommendations

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.25.09 - 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program.docx
Attachments:	- SRCS.25.09 Appendix A - 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program Guidelines.pdf - SRCS.25.09 Appendix B - 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Program Review Team.docx - SRCS.25.09 Appendix C - 2025 Community and Cultural Grant Application Recommendations.xlsx
Final Approval Date:	Jun 23, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Tracey Steele - Jun 23, 2025 - 12:13 PM**

**Darlene Joslin - Jun 23, 2025 - 12:58 PM**