



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Area Townships collaborate with rural community support agencies to form the Rural Recovery Coordinating Committee

Region of Waterloo –Following the start of the pandemic, the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich came together virtually with rural community support agencies to form the Rural Recovery Coordinating Committee. This collaborative working group, in its infancy, was able to support one another through the sharing of COVID-19 protocols, procedures, and best practices; utilizing the rural barn raising spirit.

Over time, the Committee was able to turn its attention to identifying and discussing rural priorities:

- Affordable housing
- Sustainability of local food banks and lack of access to nutritional food
- Community Health and Wellness: mental health, impacts of social isolation and domestic and family violence
- Advocating for Regional services and programs to be available and accessible in the rural areas
- Increase in COVID-19 mobile testing

The creative, imaginative, and innovative nature of this committee also lead to the brainstorming of a community-based event that offered a little bit of something for everyone. This idea came to fruition with the assistance of Township recreation coordinators and resulted in a virtual Family Day Event. A wide range of entertainment, wellbeing workshops, children’s crafts and STEM activities, and fitness classes, were just a few of the programs offered in this free online event. This joint effort allowed the four Townships and their community partners to provide a memorable community focused event in which they could be proud of.

“The virtual world has opened new possibilities. To regularly meet virtually with leaders across the townships is such an example. We are geographical spread out and yet the concerns, struggles and opportunities coming to us are very similar. Zooming with this group of rural leaders has encouraged and supported in my leadership during these pandemic times. Organizationally, it connects us at ICC to the broader needs of the rural community and how we can best work together with a common voice to promote wellness in our communities. Wellness is an elusive mixture of bio/psycho/social/spiritual factors, humans are whole beings, and we need to ensure we care for the whole person. We do not work alone. Together we are stronger”, commented Matthew Isert Bender, Interim Executive Director, Interfaith Counselling Centre.

“This level of collaboration, teamwork and knowledge sharing will serve our rural townships well post pandemic, as this committee continues to work together for the betterment of our communities and our wellbeing”, noted David Brenneman, CAO for the Township of Woolwich.

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