



**RECREATION AND CULTURE
SERVICES
MEMORANDUM**

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TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: S. LEE YOUNG, MANAGER OF RECREATION AND CULTURE PROGRAMS, EXT. 5166

NOTED: R. BELL, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

D. MCALPINE, GENERAL MANAGER OF COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: HOLIDAY SEASON PROGRAMMING INCLUDING NEW YEAR'S EVE

DATE: JANUARY 25, 2021

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update on the City of Barrie's holiday season programming, including the virtual New Year's Eve celebration and Winter Fun-in-a-Bag, which provided an opportunity for families to make special memories at home over the holidays.

New this year, the Recreation programming team provided a Winter Fun-in-a-Bag that featured two activities for kids, themed to reflect winter holidays and New Year's Eve. The Winter Fun-in-a-Bag was offered to residents by pre-registering online for a small fee of \$10/bag. The bags sold out quickly with 300 residents enjoying the fun.

Since 1998, the Downtown Countdown has brought thousands of residents and visitors together in downtown Barrie to celebrate the arrival of a new year. Due to COVID-19, Provincial restrictions prevented the City from hosting an in-person celebration, so this year's event went virtual.

Barrie's Virtual Family Countdown premiered online at 7:00 p.m. on December 31st on the City's Facebook and YouTube channels, allowing families to celebrate safely while together at home. The show featured a special concert with Barrie favourite Splash'N Boots, followed by a New Year's Eve countdown with Mayor Lehman. The show was hosted by Downtown Countdown partners, Rock 95 and 107.5 Kool FM, who support the event annually.

Between Facebook and YouTube, the virtual New Year's Eve show was viewed over 7,332 times and had more than 1,684 engagements (reactions, comments and shares). In addition to Barrie residents, the show attracted an audience from all over, including viewers from Toronto, Kingston, Hamilton, Burlington and Montreal.

This online event was a great success during the COVID-19 lockdown and provided a safe opportunity for young families to ring in the new year.