



**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: FESTIVALS AND EVENTS ONTARIO (FEO) ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

DATE: APRIL 19, 2021

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update regarding recognition that the City of Barrie has received from Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) for the virtual programming of the Canada Day and Family New Year's Eve Countdown celebrations.

For more than 30 years FEO has represented the Festivals and Events industry in Ontario and is devoted to the growth and stability of the industry, making sure communities produce unique, quality festivals in all corners of the province. This year the FEO unveiled an Achievement Awards Program which was specific to members in 2019 and 2020 that were able to Adapt – Pivot – Evolve; finding creative and innovative ways to adapt, engage, and entertain their audience in the face of the pandemic.

In 2020, both the Canada Day and Family New Year's Eve Countdown celebrations were reinvented to keep our community connected and engage while providing an opportunity for residents to celebrate safely from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The success of these virtual events was possible with support from our community partners, sponsors, funders, local media, and all those who participated virtually.

Barrie's Canada Day 2020

Each year, Canada Day festivities and fireworks draw over 40,000 people to Barrie's downtown and waterfront. Due to COVID-19, Barrie celebrated Canada Day together at home and united with fellow Canadians from coast to coast to share our national pride virtually.

The programming included elements of our traditional celebration that Recreation and Culture staff recreated in a virtual format and new partners and programming were engaged to showcase Canadian Culture and diversity while supporting local talent and business. Together with the support and assistance of the local organization Ontario Musicians Co-Operative Inc we were able to provide access for all to view through the City of Barrie's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) and the safety of your home. The two virtual shows featured a range of activities and performances for all ages and abilities.

The morning-show featured family-friendly programming including Canada Day crafts, story time with Mayor Lehman, Canadian wildlife, Science North, an Indigenous hoop dance performance, performances by buskers, local talent, and an interactive dance break.

In the evening, Barrie's Canada Day Campfire Sessions featured local artists performing original songs and Canadian favorites as well as headline performances by the Washboard Union and Jason McCoy; perfect for enjoying around the campfire.



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In addition, a Canada Day Engagement Hub was created as a place for Barrie residents to enjoy virtual programming at their leisure, including Canada themed quick polls and trivia, virtual hide & see using the City of Barrie's GIS portal, cultural activities and earning experiences from partners such as the MacLaren Art Centre and Barrie Film Festival, and a forum to share what makes them proud to be Canadian. The Canada Day videos had more than 2,993 views on Twitter and YouTube while reaching 17,636 people on Facebook. The Engagement Hub had 648 visits.

Barrie's Virtual Family NYE Countdown

Since 1998, the Downtown Countdown has brought thousands of residents and visitors together in downtown Barrie to celebrate the arrival of a new year. The festive season was a little different this year, so the City of Barrie presented Barrie's Virtual Family Countdown featuring Splash'N Boots. Viewers could tune into the City's Facebook page or YouTube channels at 7:00 p.m. for an hour-long celebration with Splash'N Boots, followed by a family countdown. The virtual show was hosted by local radio partners, Rock 95 and Kool FM as well as Mayor Lehman.

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

Recreation and Culture Services also sold a 'Winter Fun-in-a-Bag which included a variety of activities for families to do at home over the holidays, including a New Year's Eve kit with special activities to make the celebration even more festive. These bags sold for \$10 each and 300 sold out in advance.