

Hydration stations coming to Bancroft

By Sarah Sobanski

Bancroft and surrounding area is set to receive seven new hydration stations.

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge Hastings Prince Edward is purchasing hydration stations for Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, York River Public School, Bird's Creek Public School, Bancroft Public Library, North Hastings Children's Services, the North Hastings Community Integration Association and the Bancroft Family Health Team. The organizations and schools are seven of 40 successful applicants across Hastings Prince Edward County.

"I was delighted to learn that the [challenge] had deemed our grant for a hydration station successful," said Bancroft library CEO Chris Stephenson. "This is the first time we've ever had a water fountain at the library, so this is going to make a positive difference."

He added, "In the past we've had to give kids a drink of water out of the tap with a solo cup."

The library will soon have a wall-mounted water fountain, installed by Scott Simpson from SKS Plumbing and Heating. It will have a water bottle filling feature.

"We're really excited we were chosen as one of the public institutions to receive this unit and the funds to cover installation."

Community organizations were invited to apply for water bottle refill stations, water fountains, water coolers, or other water dispensers late last summer. According to a release by the challenge, its steering committee reviewed the applications and ranked them according to their demonstrated need, commitment to sustaining maintenance of the hydration station, and willingness to promote healthy hydration on an ongoing basis.

"We are purchasing new hydration stations for the community in an effort to make water more accessible to children and their families," said Emma Pillsworth, local project manager for the challenge. "Water is the best thing you can drink to stay healthy and hydrated, and we want to make it the easy choice."

The challenge is purchasing hydration stations as a part of its Water Does Wonders initiative. It's encouraging children to choose water over sugary drinks. The stations are meant to make water more accessible within the community.

The challenge dedicated October as water month to see children get and stay hydrated. According to the challenge over 7,500 local students took part in water promotion activities in schools. One saw students receive refillable water bottles for the hydration stations.

"It is great to see the positive impact that the Healthy Kids Community Challenge is in our community," said Jo-Anne Albert, mayor of the Municipality of Tweed. "I'm looking forward to filling up my water bottle at one of the new Community Hydration Stations and to seeing others do the same!"

There are 44 communities taking part in the challenge across Ontario. It promotes children's health through themes and initiatives like Water Does Wonders.