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Parks, Forestry & Recreation  
Jim Hart, General Manager

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August 26, 2011

To All Dufferin Grove Parks Users:

Recently, there has been some discussion about the City's commitment and investments in Dufferin Grove Park, and there is some confusion about how the City supports activities in the park.

I want you to know that the City values the involvement and contributions of the local community in making Dufferin Grove a vibrant and busy park. The combination of the involvement of local residents, CELOS and the City's investment supports a very high level of activity and community engagement in the park, which also contributes to making Dufferin Grove such a special place.

I also want you to know that the City has over the years made a unique, consistent and substantial investment in Dufferin Grove by providing a high level of Recreation staff resources all year round. These resources include:

- During the Summer - direct staff support to the wading pool, snack bar, food cart, sand pit, farmers market, bake oven, camp fire, and Friday night dinners. This summer there were over 40 PFR part-time staff working at the park with approximately 8 on duty at all times during day.
- During the Winter – direct staff support to the Farmers Market, Friday night dinner, ice rinks, snack bar.

In addition, over the years Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) has worked with the community and invested in many capital improvements to Dufferin Grove Park.

There has been a lot of discussion in the community this summer about PFR changes to Dufferin Grove programming. Although the City supports a unique level and type of programming at Dufferin Grove, the Park is part of the City administration. There are a number of areas we are working on to ensure that

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Dufferin Grove operations meet the City's standards of accountability, human resource protocols and contractual labour obligations. These changes have at times been difficult for staff and the community to understand.

I want to be absolutely clear that Parks, Forestry and Recreation has made no decision to reduce its support to the activities in the park. The wading pool, the playground games, the Friday night suppers, the bake oven, the snack bar and cart, – our staff continue to support these activities to the same level they have in the past.

The activities that make Dufferin Grove Park so amazing are the result of years of productive cooperation between community members and the City. I believe we can maintain the uniqueness of Dufferin Grove while also addressing some of the City's requirements and accountabilities.

I have been made aware that there is a "sleep-in" being organized for the evening of August 26 in the park to protest the City "forcing Dufferin Grove to cancel programming." I am concerned that there is a perception that the City is cancelling programs, which is not the case. As I stated above, the City has not made any decision to reduce its supports or change the activities in the park. Please be aware that our Parks bylaws prohibit overnight activity such as a sleep-in. While I respect the right of residents to speak and be heard, I urge you to respect the Parks bylaw as set out by City Council.

I look forward to continuing to work in cooperation with the community to support the activities in the park.

We welcome your feedback on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janie Romoff', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Janie Romoff  
Director Community Recreation  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

*Copy: Councillor Ana Bailao, City of Toronto  
Jim Hart, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation*