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# Get into some monkey business on New Year?s Eve

**By Brock Weir**

As we count down to the end of 2015, some of us are looking forward for a legitimate excuse to get down to some Monkey Business ? and you can get a head start on New Year's Eve this year at the Town of Aurora's Family First Night.

2016, according to the Chinese Zodiac, is the Year of the Monkey and, as such, this brought about a brainstorm of endless possibilities for Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, on how to make this a New Year's Eve to remember for the entire family.

?I want people to enjoy the rest of the year because this is going to be the Year of the Monkey and the monkey will be swinging in soon enough,? says Ms. Ware. ?When you look at the monkey, according to the Chinese Zodiac, their attributes are happy, flexible, enthusiastic, confident, skillful, inventive and clever. If those attributes are really true about this year coming up, I think the Town as a whole, as well as the individual departments, are in for a really exciting year!?

To get in on the excitement from the ground floor, head over to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Industrial Parkway North next Thursday, December 31, beginning at 6 p.m. for a series of fun activities for the whole family, including free skating and swimming from 6 ? 8 p.m. monkey-themed children's activities, including crafts, face painting, inflatables, skills games, reptile shows, magic shows, a Mad Science Demonstration, and a chance to check out Monkeytastix, a fun program for physical literacy that takes the humble jungle gym to the next level.

In addition to 2016 being the Year of the Monkey, fresh inspiration also came from Family First Night's newly improved venue. Last year, the event was held at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex as the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) was under renovation.

The change in scenery presented a few logistical challenges but, for Ms. Ware, it was well worth the wait getting back to the AFLC.

?We're going to be able to offer some exciting activities that the previous space just couldn't accommodate,? she says. ?We're going to have two much larger bouncy castles, have the space for Mad Science with dry ice bringing in the winter theme, and we are very fortunate to have a local jazz ensemble coming in to perform in the open upper hallways. The entire building will be filled with their music, which is a really new addition. I have always wanted to have some form of music at this event, but space has always been tight. This is great for us.

?We aren't crammed anymore. We're not limited to having some mini-golf in a random hallway. Now we have a complete room set aside for the reptile shows, which is fully encased in windows so everyone will be able to see, we have a room now completely dedicated to magic shows which we didn't have before, and we're thrilled in this space the public will be able to relax, spread their wings, and not be in such cramped quarters.?

As she looks ahead to next week's celebrations, Ms. Ware says she always enjoys the element of surprise ? watching people coming in ?with their own agenda to do a certain game? and having that all go by the wayside when they unexpectedly run into a friend or neighbour who then go about Family First Night together.

?There is always laughter and that is always cool to see.?

Family First Night takes over the AFLC (135 Industrial Parkway North) from 6 ? 9 p.m. on New Year's Eve. For more information, call 905-726-4762.