

Activate Aurora launches 'bold campaign'

Activate Aurora launches a bold campaign to make Aurora 'Canada's Most Active Community' on September 18 at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex.

Called both 'significant' and 'audacious', the project spans three years; built by Sport Aurora, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and driven by a cross-sectorial group of professionals and volunteers.

Significant? Childhood obesity, Type-2 diabetes, and the negative physical, emotional and social outcomes that follow are now some of our most challenging health problems. In fact, Statistics Canada in 2006 projected that for the first time in history, a child born in that year would have a shorter lifespan than his/her parents. And the problem isn't just with youth. Inactivity and poor diets result in health problems in adults that cause health care costs to escalate because of largely preventable diseases.

What else is significant? The Activate Aurora team includes representatives from local school boards, Seneca College, municipal recreation providers, sport, Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Region Public Health and our own Aurora Seniors' Association. A cross-sectorial problem requires a cross-sectorial solution and for the first time these important sectors in education, health care, sport and recreation are working together to solve a problem.

The province and nation are watching what we are doing to see if this is an effective way to motivate communities to be more active and healthy. We intend to show them.

Audacious? This word is legitimate. It is a very tall order to make Aurora 'Canada's Most Active Community.' Canada is replete with communities who are active. We hear about and admire them for their healthy approaches.

Active communities are vibrant. They have multiple opportunities for people to get involved. They are inclusive of everyone, regardless of their age or ability, gender, culture or heritage. They are communities that attract and support people.

Our 'audacious' project will make Aurora a better place to live, to work and to play. It is why the Mayor's Task Force on Physical Activity was formed and why it has endorsed this project.

So how will we do this? We'll do this through communication and education, capacity building and training, and delivering relevant programs for Aurorans. A new online support hub to provide motivation and information will be unveiled. Our first Activate Aurora school, Rick Hansen Public School, has been announced. Multi-sport activities designed to increase physical literacy, and appropriate activities for adults and seniors are in progress.

September 18 is the launch when local and national dignitaries will be providing their encouragement. I invite you to come out to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex at 1 p.m. and find out how you and your family can help make Aurora 'Canada's Most Active Community.' Every step counts! You will learn why. For more information visit www.beactiveaurora.com.

Ron Weese

Chair, Activate Aurora Working Group