

Big things coming for Aurora's Special Olympians



Sometimes Annual General Meetings (AGMs) are boring, but this was not the case at the Special Olympics Ontario ? Aurora AGM last week.

There was laughter, a few tears, the election of Board members, and of course the presentation of the financials, but mostly there was a sense of something great building in this community.

Nicola McGovern, Head Coach of the Special Olympics Golf program in Aurora (Aurora Eagles), regaled the group with photos and the story of her journey as Team Canada Golf Head Coach at the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games, this past summer from July 25 to August 2.

Accompanying Nicola was star athlete Tess Trojan, who shared what it was like to prepare for the Games and win a gold medal in this inaugural event.

Keeping in mind this spirit of inclusivity, Nancy Black, former club president of the Master Ducks Swim Club and founder of Special Olympics in Aurora, announced a commitment by the adult club to include adult Special Olympics athletes in its programming.

?The Aurora Master Ducks will ensure that training and competitive opportunities are available to adults with intellectual disabilities,? said Ms. Black. ?In this year of Sport in Aurora and in conjunction with the Provincial ?Partners in Play? initiative, management and team members will work closely with Special Olympics Ontario ? Aurora to ensure there are no barriers to participation this year and beyond.?

That statement mirrors the intentions of the Provincial initiative called Partners in Play, which, at its root, is designed to link sport organizations with Special Olympics athletes.

Following that announcement, Michael Chung, District Developer for Special Olympics Ontario Head Office, along Karla Williams, who shares the same role in the GTA, had some very good news to share with the group.

?Special Olympics Ontario would like to include Aurora as a priority community for our Partners in Play project,? said Mr. Chung. ?This project will be a ?stepping-stone? to further promote the work of Special Olympics in Aurora. Since there is such a strong desire to raise awareness and to ensure that Special Olympics is part of other Year of Sport priorities, we are glad to have this great chance to work together with the Aurora Special Olympics Community, Sport Aurora and the Town of Aurora.?

This effort was also supported at the meeting by Gerry Therrien of Aurora's Knights of Columbus, who presented the organization with a cheque of over \$1,100 for their efforts.

In addition to the Knights of Columbus, support too was offered by Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Parks and Recreation, who said the Town would assist in work being planned, as well as laying the groundwork for a Special Olympics ?Play Day? in the community as part of the Activate Aurora campaign.