

Bring home the bacon at Family First Night

By Brock Weir

Close out the year and ring in a new one by bringing home the bacon from Family First Night.

Well, not literally, but there will be pig-themed crafts galore in store as the annual New Year's Eve tradition at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) ushers in the Year of the Pig.

Family First night will take place Monday, December 31, from 6 ? 9 p.m. at the AFLC and will feature public swimming and skating, reptile shows with ZooteK, magic shows with Brandon Davi Magic, and children's activities ranging from face painting, to inflatables, to the Complex's rock climbing wall.

?The key foundation for Family First Night has always been our magic shows, the reptile shows and magic ? we haven't wavered from that formula because the response from the community is too overwhelming,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. ?Mad Science is going to be doing some crazy slime demonstrations, where everyone will be able to come in and make their own slime concoctions. We will be welcoming back Brandon Davis Magic and it has been a couple of years since we've had him because he's always travelling to different countries around this time of year. ZooteK will be bringing a surprise or two and we have some arts and crafts planned with spin art.

?2019 is the Year of the Pig, so we will be celebrating the onset with some pig-themed crafts. We will be exploding with the colour pink! We also want people to learn about the traits of those who were born in the Year of the Pig.?

Family First Night is the final event in a full calendar of events hosted this year by the Town of Aurora, a year which began with an extremely cold Arctic Adventure on Family Day, peaked with an extremely hot Canada Day celebration, and has closed out the fall with a pretty damp Santa Under the Stars Parade. Indeed, Ms. Ware says it has been a year of extremes, but all worthwhile.

?Each event has a completely different personality; they are all at different times of year, but the true blessing of my job is there is always a specific moment within each event that I get to see and that is what makes it all worth it.?

One such instance happened during the Multicultural Festival at Town Park in September, which was attended by a princess from Cameroon who shared stories about her extensive family ? over 70 siblings! ? and the intricacy of their culture from plural marriage to royal duties back home. Another happened at the very end of November's drizzly Santa Under the Stars Parade at which Ms. Ware observed one young hockey player climbing down from his float, proclaiming his ?Christmas was complete? because he got to ride with Santa Claus.

Looking ahead to New Year's Eve, Ms. Ware says a hallmark of Family First Night is watching community connections happen.

?I have visually been connecting the dots on this theory: over the holidays, people spend time with their relatives, but when you come to Family First Night, I find people come together to spend time with their community family,? she says. ?Quite often, residents have come how and are connecting with their neighbours, parents of their kids' friends, those they go to school with, and I find Family First Night is a celebration of our community family.?

For more on Family First Night, visit www.aurora.ca/firstnight.