

Chamber Street Festival promises music, fun ? and a few secrets



By Brock Weir

Whether you're looking for a good buy, a day of family fun, or an opportunity to tap into your inner Sherlock Holmes, there's something for everyone planned at next week's Aurora Chamber Street Festival.

Now entering its twenty-second year, the popular annual festival, which sees Yonge Street closed from Wellington Street in the north to Murray Drive in the south for a jam-packed day of merriment, organizers are hard at work ensuring this year's Street Fest is the best yet.

“It is a fun, family-friendly day to either spend with the family, get outside, get some fresh air, and you can support local businesses, learn about lots of different community organizations on the streets, and there are always lots of opportunities to win fabulous raffle prizes,” says Sandra Watson of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. “The food and drinks are outstanding and there's something for everyone. I think if you want to get out there, meet your neighbours and see some local businesses, this is a great way to do it!”

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce is still finalizing vendor spots along Yonge Street and doing some fine tuning. Right now they have sold 620 out of 660 spots ? 75 sold in the last week alone ? so they are on track to make sure there really is something for every taste.

In fact, just what you might find at the Street Festival is never a certainty until the day of as many vendors come out at the last minute looking for opportunities to take part ? opportunities which the Chamber works very hard to accommodate.

At this point, however, the big food trucks are all confirmed and ready to go, as is the entertainment lineup.

Buskers will be entertaining all along Yonge Street at various locations and various times throughout the day. Two live stages are always popular draws and the northern most stage at Yonge and Church, just south of the Aurora Public Library, will feature the local band Six Ways to Sunday while the southern stage down at Brookland Avenue will host The Coyotes, which Ms. Watson says “are always a Street Festival favourite and play fabulous music all day long.”

“We mix up our buskers every year, but one that always draws a huge crowd and remains a fan favourite is our fire guy,” Ms.

Watson continues. “He will be doing four performances at the intersection of Yonge and Brookland starting at 1 p.m. on the hour. His shows last about 15 minutes and he just does amazing fire breathing, running around on an electric scooter with flame-throwing obstacles and the young and old just love him.”

Old favourites in place, the 2017 Aurora Street Festival will offer some new twists this year.

Among them is a partnership with Brainy Games and Mark Kolb who has developed a Pokemon GO-style app which will encourage Festival-goers to find “secrets” along the street and in various vendor booths.

Another feature is a partnership with Activate Aurora on Open Streets, which will see a couple of streets adjoining the Street Festival route closed to vehicular traffic and open to sports and play, including a three-on-three basketball tournament.

“I am hoping there is going to be a really good flow of people who are attending the Open Streets and will come to the street festival,” says Ms. Watson. It is just going to be really good for the Open Streets participants and our vendors, bringing in another mix of attendees.”

As a note, following last year's controversy over a petting zoo hosted by a third-party business adjacent to the Street Festival last year, the Chamber will not allow live animals at any of the booths at the Street Festival this year and going forward. The 2017 Aurora Chamber Street Festival will take place Sunday, June 4, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Yonge Street. The Festival is brought to you by presenting sponsor St. Andrew's College and "Friends of the Festival" the Town of Aurora, Magna, Geranium Homes and Goodlife Fitness.