

Family fun is just the tip of the iceberg at Arctic Adventure



By Brock Weir

Athletes who descended on South Korea for the 2018 Winter Olympics last week are not the only ones with a chance to try out their prowess on the ice and snow ? budding athletes, young tots just learning how to walk in the snow, and their whole families can have just that and a whole lot more next week at Aurora's Arctic Adventure.

Family Day arrives this Monday, February 19, and the Town of Aurora is in the final heat of planning all things cool.

Arctic Adventure, Aurora's Family Day tradition, will take place at Town Park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Featuring mini-snow tubing, mini-curling, mock ice fishing, body zorbs, bonfires, live music, wildlife shows and, depending on the kindness of Mother Nature, outdoor skating, there is something for everyone.

While activities will be ongoing throughout the day, on-stage entertainment begins at 10.15 a.m. with a performance by the band Louisa & The Planets. They are followed at 11 a.m. by the Speaking of Wildlife presentation. Next up is the Fat Cat Jamboree Band at 12 noon (and again at 1.45 p.m.), the Battle of the Chainsaws Competition at 1 p.m. and 2.30 p.m., and three performances by the Stacey Renee band.

?Aurora's Arctic Adventure is a wonderful event that gives families an opportunity to try out new activities together as a family,? said Mayor Geoff Dawe.

But, for Shelley Ware, Aurora's Special Events Coordinator, it is also about trying out new activities as neighbours.

?My experience last year was one of those events where I met more new residents than not,? says Ms. Ware. ?At several of our events, like Concerts in the Park, we have a lot of traditional event-goers, but at last year's Arctic Adventure, there were many brand new residents to the area coming to check things out, they were talking to each other, and you could really see those new connections form.?

Ms. Ware and her team are putting all their plans in place for the big event ? well, as much as they can because the great outdoors in the Great Canadian Winter is always tricky, unpredictable business.

?As the name states, it's always an adventure,? she says. ?Arctic Adventure always provides lots of cool opportunities. Some of the adventures we're planning include mini-snow tubing and we have Snow Valley coming up with their portable snow tube which, for some kids, is their first time trying snow tubing.

?Last year, we introduced Body Zorbs (body bubbles) to the event, which was really, really well received and we have an even bigger setup for those. We're optimistic at this point of having an outdoor skating rink. Everything else has fallen into place in terms of a winter theme, but we haven't ignored some of the tried and true favourites such as inflatables for the kids and some tasty food vendors set up.

?We're crossing our fingers and toes to Mother Nature, but it's Family Day and this is one of the easiest ways to celebrate with your family; whether your family is big or small, whether your family includes your neighbour, the definition of family is very broad and this is really a celebration of adventure.?

As the 2018 Winter Olympics continue, organizers will have a celebratory element on site with hand-held flags being distributed to

Arctic Adventure-goers to take home and wave while cheering on our athletes.

Activities outside Town Park to mark Family Day include free Zumba classes presented by Club Aurora at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, as well as a free leisure swim at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Additionally, the Aurora Cultural Centre will be open from 1 ? 4 p.m. with the Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts, a gallery curated by students from Aurora High School, Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, and St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School.