

Young Tigers feel the creative roar, getting crafty to make a difference



By Brock Weir

The Aurora Tigers' Pee Wee A team was looking forward to showing off their creative endeavours next weekend when Rogers Hometown Hockey rolls into Aurora, but eager shoppers were so taken with their artistic efforts, they were a sell-out before Ron MacLean had a chance to pack his bags.

The Pee Wee Tigers are basking in the success of their first Charity Sale, more than doubling what they expected to make for the non-profit Welcoming Arms through the sale of homemade crafts as varied as hot chocolate, aromatherapy bath salts, and slime. Setting up shop at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex this past Sunday from 8 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., they planned on returning to the SARC on the evening of December 7, but their stock of over 90 different items were quickly snapped up by eager customers, allowing the budding hockey stars to double their fundraising goals.

‘They were absolutely thrilled,’ says mom Kasie Savage, noting the team made \$760 sales through a \$200 investment in crafting supplies.

Each year, the Aurora Minor Hockey Association (AMHA) raises money for Welcoming Arms, which provides support and resources for local families in need. They typically do so by asking each player's parents to contribute between \$15 and \$20, money which is then collected and donated directly to the charity.

This year, however, Ms. Savage pitched a different approach: collecting that same money, but investing it in supplies for the kids to flex their creative muscles and take ownership of the mission.

‘I am a mom of three boys, so it seemed unconventional for a parent of just boys to expect boys to be eager to craft, especially at the age of 12,’ says Ms. Savage. ‘But, I thought it would be a really fun idea for the boys to take that \$20 from their parents and turn it into something more and, at the same time, learn business skills, marketing, advertising, selling themselves, and learn ultimately what it is like to work hard, take the money you worked hard with, and give it to those who are really less fortunate.’

17 boys descended on her house to brainstorm ideas on what they could make. They looked for things that could be made with everyday affordable items, looking to a few internet hacks along the way. In the process, they talked about what it takes to make a great salesperson and bring all of their strengths together to make the sale a success.

‘Perhaps there were some parent eyerolls?’ and my own husband had numerous eyerolls in the house, like, ‘You think all these kids are going to want to make crafts?’ but, for the most part, all the parents we heard from were eager to get the kids involved in something,’ says Ms. Savage. ‘The boys were absolutely thrilled [with the results]. Not one boy griped about making crafts. They were hesitant about being creative, but it all turned into such a great learning experience and such a valuable experience to have the kids actually take that small investment and turn it into so much more.’