

Arctic Adventure is fun-filled weekend to get outdoors, make new connections

Last week's warm snap might be over, but there are plenty of reasons to get outside to Town Park for Family Day weekend.

The perennial favourite Arctic Adventure returns this weekend with two days of family fun.

On Saturday evening, the Speaking of Wildlife show will take over the bandshell area giving families a chance to get up close and personal with a number of critters that call Canada home.

Running from 6 ? 8 p.m., the evening will include story walks, camp fires, s'mores, and lit-up igloos throughout the night, with the wildlife show beginning at 6.30 p.m.

On Monday, February 19, Family Day itself, a full day of activities will ensure Town Park is bustling.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the day will include professional ice carving, outdoor winter games, mini-snow tubing, inflatables and live entertainment.

?With our Saturday feature, the response from the community has been overwhelming,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, on the decision made last year to spread Arctic Adventure over a two-day period. ?For our story walks, we take two themed books and present them with the illustrations on storyboards so you literally have to walk the entire length of the Armoury deck before you get to the end of the story. What's really rewarding is seeing some families where the children will be reading it to their parents and, for some, the parents will be reading it to the children ? and the font is so big there is actually a literacy component. Of course, with the Saturday program being in the evening, all the story walk panels are lit up and it's really enchanting, which adds to the overall feeling and atmosphere.?

On Monday, Ware says ?we're looking forward to making lots of adventures,? beginning with the Canadian Lumberjack Team, which will be presenting two dynamic shows.

For the first time this year, the Fire Guy will be joining the presentation with a show of his own, as well as acclaimed Fire Dancer Zoe.

?On Monday, we will be celebrating the Year of the Dragon and we will have huge dragon ice carvings and a live demo ? I'm not saying what the carving will be, but you'll have to watch and see what the carver transforms the ice into!? says Ware. ?In addition, we'll have food vendors, Snow Valley Ski Resort will be bringing their mini-snow tubing run with them. We'll have a Nerf inflatable axe throwing game set up, our really well-attended mock ice fishing and with the continuous ongoing entertainment on stage, there are also activities to tour within the park.?

If you can't wait until Saturday to have some fun, there are also some activities you can do on your own ahead of time. In addition to the ongoing Cabin Fever photo contest, the Town is also offering a Family Community Scavenger Hunt, powered by the Goosechase app.

?People can go to our website, see the code, and start doing the missions ? really, Arctic Adventure has already started!? says Ware. ?With our missions, each of them are adventures and the key theme to this Family Day weekend is Stay Active and Have an Adventure.?

And the best way to do so is outside, she adds.

Families in the past have told her that they're looking for ?any excuse? to get outside by the time Arctic Adventure and Family Day comes around, ?but sometimes you need the motivation to leave a warm home and do something active outside.?

?Although this is definitely winter, this is almost like the onset of Spring,? says Ware. ?Everyone is out enjoying themselves, being active, because what's next? It's Spring. It is kind of like you get over the cabin fever of the winter and this is like the beginning of our outdoor event season. Of course, it is also the community reacquainting themselves with others because primarily for January a lot of people do stay in and stay warm until they get through the colder part of the winter. It is kind of like an awakening of the community.?

For more on this year's program, how to participate in the photo contest, and take part in the scavenger hunt, visit aurora.ca/arcticadventure.

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