

Aurora native's story brought to life by Coke, Jordan Eberle

By Scott Wheeler
Special to The Auroran

On Wednesday, May 1, Coke Zero, in partnership with Bell Media's TSN, launched the first short film of the Moment Zero series.



Left to right, coach Glen Bince (Matthew in the film), Kevin 'Wheels' Wheeler and neighbour David Fong at Real Sports Bar for the Moment Zero launch. Photo by Scott Wheeler.

The Moment Zero series is a new marketing campaign created by Coke Zero that aims to bring real Canadian sports stories to life on the big screen.

After searching social media and sifting through thousands of submissions, Coke, much to the surprise of Aurora resident Kevin Wheeler, chose his story.

In re-enacting the story, Coke brought on Edmonton Oilers right winger Jordan Eberle to star as Kevin 'Wheels' Wheeler, as well as TSN broadcasters Jay Onrait and Dan O'Toole, who took on the roles of two police officers in the film. 'Wheels', a nickname Kevin received playing minor hockey in Aurora, became a focal point of the marketing campaign.

The short, three minute film, which can be found online or in movie theatres across the country, tells the story of a decisive moment of action that leads to greatness.

In Wheeler's story, Kevin forgets his equipment on his way to a hockey tournament in St. Catharines, playing, at the time, AEA hockey for Aurora in 2002.

In a panic, Kevin then makes a call to his Aurora neighbour, David Fong, who grabs his equipment and proceeds to meet Kevin, and mother Laurie Wheeler midway to exchange the gear.

Already late, Laurie, in her rush to get Kevin back to the game takes Hwy 407 and gets pulled over. After being allowed to continue, Kevin arrives mid-way through the game, going on to score the winning goal.

Kevin, who had no expectations when he submitted the story on Coke Zero's Facebook page, remains blown away, well after his trip to Edmonton for the filming or his interviews with various major media outlets.

Through the use of 15 second commercials on TSN advertising Kevin's Twitter handle (@kevinwheels15), short videos done by TSN broadcaster Cabral 'Cabbie' Richards, coupled with other social media marketing, people across Canada began asking 'Who is Kevin 'Wheels' Wheeler?'.

'It's been an extremely surreal experience,' Kevin says, going on to explain that there was a tremendous amount of pressure throughout the process.

'Meeting Eberle for the first time was a really cool experience,' he says, 'I was super nervous, because the social media aspect of the campaign revolved around me and him being best buds.'

David Fong, whose character plays a comical and heroic role in the film, was at the campaign launch at Real Sports Bar in Toronto to view the film.

‘I enjoyed it very much,’ he says. ‘It was good because there was an element of humour to it and there was the urgency of the situation with the pressure to get the equipment and get to the game.’

David downplays his neighbourly story of that day, years ago, in saying, ‘I knew I had a key to the house, so getting in was no problem. I was just hoping that everything was in the bag and if something wasn’t, I was wondering where I could go find it.’

For Kevin though, he argues his story is no different than many others that have likely been created in a hockey community like Aurora.

‘Everyone in Aurora supports each other,’ he says. ‘I look forward to being able to give back that same experience that I got from the AMHA and all my coaches playing rep and house league hockey when I have kids of my own.’

The film can be found online at youtube.com/momentzero.