

Back-to-School Sports Day set to bring community together

As kids get ready for a return to classrooms next week, a Back-to-School Sports Day will serve as a good warm-up and bring the community together at the same time.

Aurora's inaugural Back-to-School Sports Day, which is set to take place at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex this Saturday, August 30, from 1 ? 5 p.m., is the joint effort of the Aurora Black Community Association, the Town of Aurora, York Regional Police, Catholic Community Services of York Region, and Play Forever Canada.

It will be a chance for kids ? and their families ? to hit the basketball court, try their hands at bocce, have some fun with traditional potato sack and egg-and-spoon races, and even get a feel for sports popular in other parts of North America that are just starting to make inroads in Canada.

The first 200 kids to register will receive free backpacks laden with donated school supplies.

From the perspective of the Aurora Black Community Association (ABC), it's a chance to underscore their commitment to ?building bridges across cultures and empowering youth in Aurora and the surrounding Region.?

It will also include the presentation of an education bursary in memory of flight student Savanna May Royes, a 21-year-old Aurora resident and aspiring pilot, who lost her life earlier this year in a mid-air crash at her Manitoba flight school.

ABC founder Phiona Durrant says a sport day like this was inspired by traditions in her native Jamaica where ?house colours? were celebrated with events like track and field.

?It was a big community thing with great energy,? she recalls. ?It was about school and community and really grounded in community unity and amplifying leadership because of the different roles you get as students to play. It was about family, making people feel they belonged and that's where it started. One of [the ABC's] mandates is about bridging culture and building community and, for me, partnership and collaboration is essential.

?It's through programs like these when we come together and see that we're just people we create an understanding of different cultures, working together, playing together, then it will truly take a village because when you see a kid on the street hurting or in need of supplies, I don't care what skin colour you are, who you are, your postal code, you know this is a community. This is for all children because we really want children to, yes, see colour, because you're not blind, but see that unity that we can change in that next generation.?

At press time this week, nearly 230 participants had signed up for the event with the numbers growing by the day. While they've secured materials to stuff 200 backpacks, organizers welcome donations of both backpacks and those all-important supplies to make sure no one goes home empty-handed.

?We want everyone to continue to register, even if they see there's a waiting list,? says Durrant. ?The point of the waiting list is that we wanted to let them know that a backpack is not guaranteed, but they will still have a great time. It's the last day before the holiday, before back-to-school, and it's a really great time to come and make a connection.

?People can still register at www.aurorablackcommunity.com/events-1 and if others decide that they want to donate a backpack with some supplies on the day of, drop it off by all means or call me to say you have a backpack you want to give. Just register and build some connections!?

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