

Back to the future at Aurora Community Centre as Town launches roller skating drop-ins



It's shaping up to be a full circle summer for the Aurora Community Centre as the Town of Aurora launches a new series of roller skating drop-ins.

Beginning Tuesday, June 23 and running on every subsequent Tuesday from 7.30 ? 9 p.m., one of the arenas at the Aurora Community Centre (ACC) will be transformed into a roller rink, bringing a storied Aurora tradition back to life.

The June 23 date is a chance to enjoy the program for free with pre-registration and those looking to lace up are asked to bring their own roller skates or roller blades. For subsequent dates, registration is set at \$3.37.

?This summer, roll into retro fun at the Roller Skating Drop-In,? said the Town in a statement. ?Open to all ages, this feel-good weekly event runs every Tuesday from 7.30 ? 9 p.m., bringing the community together for an evening of skating, music and movement.

?Participants can roller skate and enjoy vibrant summer vibes with tunes by David Heard of Dave's Vinyl Party.?

The tunes spun by Dave and Dave's Vinyl Party will be another full-circle moment as Heard was actively involved with music programming at the roller rink when it was in its prime.

He says the upcoming drop-in and the summer season that follows is all about community.

?Everybody gets something different from an activity like roller skating,? he says. ?For some, it could be just great exercise. For others, it's a chance to vibe to the music. Some people just like to get out and, in the skate community, when it grows, it becomes a very strong community. The big thing about roller skating is the music. Music brings people together and when you just add something great like roller skating, it's just an all-around win.?

As he's pieced together his vinyl music program, Heard says it will be "as close as possible to the last time it was done in the 1970s in the same location at the ACC" and some of the records he's set to spin actually originated at the Canadiana Roller Rink, artefacts Heard was able to re-acquire as he continues to build his vinyl archive on Vata Court.

"On opening night, I'm going totally old-school and putting together a new program of great funk and R&B, and maybe a couple of disco tracks that were really popular in the late 70s through to the 80s," says Heard. "Then, on June 30, and we love this because it's also [the same night as] Dance in the Park, people can come roller skating and then they can go over to Town Park for the dance, but that night I'm doing something special, too - an all-Canadian curated program highlighting the bands that truly played the Aurora Community Centre Back in the day, including some very iconic bands like Rush. It's going to be very historic, very authentic, very nostalgic."

Themes for later Tuesday evenings include a reggae playlist curated for International Peace & Love Day, an 80s night, and much more.

If skating isn't your thing and you're more of a music lover - that's fine, too, as spectators are welcome to be a part of the evenings, as well.

"They may not be able to put on a pair of roller skates, a pair of quads as we call them, but they can still come, sit down, watch the skaters, and enjoy that music history," says Heard. "About two years ago, I did a skate for a roller-skating facility in Orillia. When the doors opened, I could have wept with joy because the first three people through the door was a gentleman on a walker and two people on scooters. They didn't come to skate, they came to be a part of the community, watch the skaters, and enjoy the music. It's inclusive."

"I think [this series] will lead to much bigger things to do with skating. If the citizens and those abroad help us build this, I'm sure the Town will do something bigger next. We just have to pray to those skate gods that it happens!?"

To register, visit aurora.ca/skating.

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