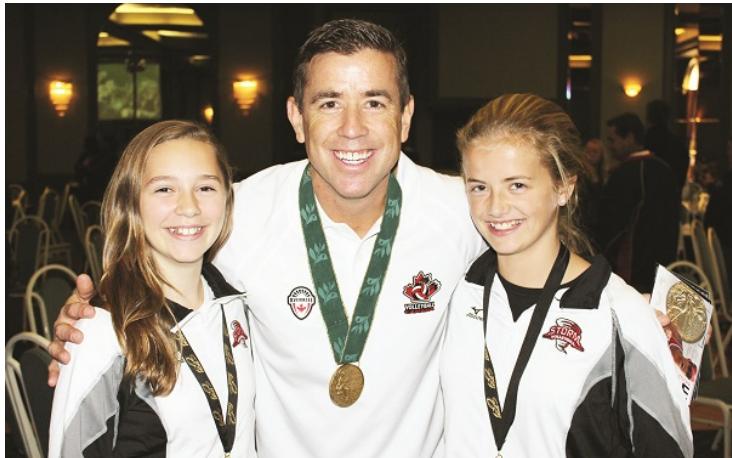


Breakfast celebrates Aurora's 2012 - 2013 sport champions



By Jeff Doner

Sport Aurora held their annual Breakfast of Champions to honour the community's many championship teams and athletes on Sunday.

Hundreds of participants were on hand to receive awards for achieving a provincial championship or higher in a variety of sports including: hockey, lacrosse, baton, swimming, baseball, and volleyball.

Three time volleyball Olympian Mark Heese was the master of ceremonies and was joined by former Olympian gymnast Jessica Tudos and former NHL player Jim Thomson.

Heese, who lives in Aurora, said he is glad to see the sports scene thriving in Aurora.

?Ever since I retired I realized how important it is to get out there and inspire the next generation and the next Olympians,? he said. ?I've got my medal here and it's great to see the smiles that it puts on their faces, so it's always nice to be able to do that. I just live around the corner, so it's important to keep it local and I want to support sport in this area.?

He was also enthusiastic about acknowledging the hard work of young athletes within the community.

?These young kids, they're asked to do a lot of their sport now; they're more and more becoming like mini-professionals, so to be able to recognize them and reward them for all their hard work and commitment, I think that's important,? he said.

?You want to feel special and come up on the stage in front of other athletes from the community and applaud their hard work. I think that's a great initiative and I certainly hope it continues and I'm sure it will.?

The Novice 1 Redbirds Lacrosse Springfield team received medals for achieving a win at the provincial championships last year. Head coach Patrick Sprigg said he was proud of his team and they were excited to be recognized by others in Aurora.

?Redbirds lacrosse hasn't won a lot of championships, we're a growing organization, so this is pretty special, because as you can see there are two teams that brought home a championship,? Sprigg explained, referring to the bantam Redbirds who also won a provincial championship.

?For our kids being nine and 10 years old, it was good to be recognized, because it's a short five-week season with two games every

Saturday with practices and playing in the snow, sleet, rain and everything.?

Zane Grossinger, captain of the 14U Storm Thunder volleyball team, spoke on behalf of his provincial championship winning team and said the Breakfast of Champions was a nice end to a successful season.

?It's a really good feeling,? he said. ?This is my fourth year playing volleyball and we finally won a provincial championship, which was just the greatest feeling in the world and so was going up there and accepting this award from the Town of Aurora.?

Grossinger said his team has faced some adversity over the years, but added that the current group of players is committed and looking forward to a new challenge.

?This year was a brand new team made up of a bunch of guys from all over. We came together and work well together and we accomplished a big goal.?

Sport Aurora is a not-for-profit sport organization that involves 27 member sports organizations and close to 10,000 participants from across the community.

For more information, visit www.sportaurora.ca.