

Creativity set to be unleashed at Aurora's Youth Innovation Fair

Put on your thinking caps and get that creativity flowing as the Town of Aurora is now accepting student registrations for the 2026 Youth Innovation Fair.

Set for Wednesday, May 13, York Region students in Grades 4 to 12 are invited to register for the event to showcase their creativity through innovative ideas and real-world problem-solving, particularly in the areas of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), social innovation, robotics, gaming, e-sports, green technology, and more.

Students can register as individuals or as a group.

"We're really looking at innovations that focus on STEM, social innovation, robotics, gaming e-sports, green tech, and more, but we also don't want to focus too much on that so students only think their innovations have to fit those categories; we really want as much open-mindedness and creativity as possible and we all know with the youth there is no shortage of creativity. It's always quite exciting to see what comes in from our youth," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

What helps take student submissions to the next level, adds Erin Hamilton, Sport and Community Development Specialist for the Town of Aurora, is "passion for their innovation."

"I think it really speaks to the energy they put in and when they have a direct link to the passion and a connection to what they're developing, they really spend a lot of time working through how that impacts the community, how it impacts them, how it impacts their family, and a true understanding of what their ideas can do for the community and those people around them."

Looking back over previous years, some of the projects Hamilton says stick out in her mind are those where students have focused on the wellbeing of themselves and others.

"I think when we look at today's society and all the information around, whether it was something that would warm them up or something that would help them calm their nerves, I think we're seeing a bit more of that from our youth where they're looking at things that can bring them a bit more comfort where there's a lot going on around social media, they're online a lot, and they're really looking at ways that they can help with their own mental health and wellbeing of those around them," she says.

Adds Ware: "Some of the innovations I saw, there was a younger student who had coded and created from scratch this form of Frogger game, but the game was to settle stress levels. There were a couple of students that teamed up together on a weather thermometer-type innovation to predict the weather better than the Weather Network. When Erin mentions their passion, that is what you saw all throughout the night last year. You saw that first, then you saw their invention."

As students think ahead to the innovations they want to develop and bring to the fair, Ware suggests students lean in on their support systems to get it just right.

"You have the ideas, you have the capabilities, so once you come to your idea and develop it, practice it, challenge it, ask your friends, ask your family, because innovation is about evolving," she says. "As the idea evolves and snowballs, that's where it really comes to fruition. For some of the kids who perhaps might be shy to try something like this, just imagine what kind of adults, and what kind of community contributors they're going to be down the road; for them to come up with the confidence to participate in this, this is going to be the start of their innovation journey and they might as well start it off at a really fun, supportive event!"

Hamilton adds it's important to be flexible. Your first idea might not be the final one you bring to the Fair, and it's important to be open to evolving as you work through it.

"Test it out, practice your presentation your first iteration of your idea or innovation may not work. Learn what's working, what's

not working, and be able to speak to it and how you've changed from the time you started," she says. "Don't wait until the week before to put your product together. Try some different things because you'd be surprised at how your product or concept can evolve and become better over time by your willingness to try it, engage with other people, or do whatever you can."

For more information on Aurora's 2026 Youth Innovation Fair, including how to register, visit aurora.ca/YouthInnovation.

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