

## Family First Night celebrates dawn of 2025, Year of the Snake

Aurora residents can ring in the New Year at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex this Tuesday as the Town hosts its annual Family First Night.

As the community looks forward to 2025, Family First Night is an opportunity to gather for an evening of fun with free swimming, skating, activities ? and the chance to slither over to a few creatively crafty stations to celebrate the incoming Year of the Snake.

Beginning at 6 p.m., and running through 9 p.m., the Town's Special Events team have planned a full evening of bubble, reptile, science and magic shows, leisure swims, holiday skates, crafts, balloon twisting, and face painting.

?This is a classic event in that we have ZooTek returning with three reptile shows; we have Smile Canada returning with three bubble shows; Mad Science will be doing a dry ice experiment, which will provide kids with a hands-on learning activity, and we also have the Pickpocket Magician who will be doing two shows while public skating and swimming is all happening ? and it's all free,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. ?There will also be face painting, balloon twisting, inflatables, and indoor games in the gymnasium. I'm very reflective on how we incorporate the Chinese New Year because I learn each year. With 2025 being the Year of the Snake ? and I'm deathly afraid of snakes! ? it's been a reflective time as I learn about the traits of the snake, how it fits in with the Chinese New Year and this year we're celebrating the onset of the coming Year of the Snake with an interesting twist!

?We really do try to pack as much as many family-oriented opportunities as we can. From 6 ? 9 p.m., it's a way to celebrate earlier in the evening and it enables families who do leave with any excess energy left over to be able to have other plans that evening.?

For more information on Family First Night, including a full-schedule of activities, visit [aurora.ca/familyfirstnight](http://aurora.ca/familyfirstnight).

Family First Night is the last special event in what has turned out to be a very busy year.

Asked whether this is considered a grand finale of the year, however, Ware replied with a laugh that it's hard to feel that way as they're already in the middle of planning for Canada Day 2025!

Looking back over 2024, one of the key highlights for Ware was the opening of Aurora Town Square in September.

?Every single event has its own personality and there is always, always that ah-ha moment,? says Ware of what makes each event special. ?But, since you asked for [a single highlight] I don't think anything can touch the official grand opening of Town Square when the Town Crier led the St. Andrew's Pipe Band into the Square for the first time for the official ribbon cutting.

?Between when the tender was issued and the opening on September 21, a lot went on, which I call the ?dash' between August 2020-September 21, 2024. So much hard work, passion, fun, innovation, problem-solving ? every skillset was empowered to push to the end amongst all staff. In that moment, we were there and it was officially opened. Even now, just talking about it, is emotional, but that moment would be my highlight for 2024.

?For our events, I truly feel we have the best audiences, we have the best spectators, and we have the best participants. Also, with the small-town charm we house, we're able to attract a really great calibre of talent ? but not only just talented artists, but really good people who put their all into what they deliver in services in Aurora ? and I think this year we really need to pay tribute to Mother Nature because, from a weather perspective, she was our cheerleader this year.

?And Family First Night isn't weather-dependent, so pack up and come on over!?

**By Brock Weir**