

Jumpstart Games gets kids moving in Aurora



By Jake Courtepatte

Sometimes kids just want to play, and hundreds got a chance to on Thursday thanks to Canadian Tire's Jumpstart.

About 300 kids from the Region converged on Machell Park in Aurora to take part in the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Games, a day in the sun to try almost every summer sport imaginable.

While the Games were held in Aurora for the thirteenth year, the quest to get kids active has been going on for more than a decade.

"We put on over thirty Jumpstart Games across the country each year," said Lori Gagnon, Regional Manager of Jumpstart for the GTA. "The idea is just to give kids in the community a chance to come out and have a fun day of sport and activity. That's really what Jumpstart tries to do year-round, is give kids a chance to play."

Since 2005, Jumpstart has helped more than one million kids in Canada get back in the game, as organized sports becomes increasingly expensive.

In 2015 alone, Jumpstart helped over 130 kids in York Region get back in the game and disbursed almost \$26,000 in the Aurora area.

"I get choked up at some of the events, hearing some of the stories," said Gagnon. "I think sometimes people forget how much sports can do for you and your character. I grew up in sports, and I think people take for granted the teamwork, and comradery, and pride that comes with it. There's a sense of responsibility that comes with a team and we're big champions of that."

Thursday's Jumpstart Games was a shining example of what it means to get kids active, with stations ranging from soccer, to watersports, to an obstacle course.

"We've got kids from Boys and Girls Clubs all over the GTA, and community centres. So we work with these centres throughout the year to get kids involved, and we invited them out here for a day to just let loose."