

Magna Hoedown is 'critical' to growth of Aurora Youth Soccer Club



By Jeff Doner

In the midst of celebrating their 50th anniversary in the community, the Aurora Youth Soccer Club was also thrilled about being named a recipient of funds raised through the 2014 Magna Wild Wild West Hoedown.

The Aurora Youth Soccer Club (AYSC) is one of 15 local organizations to benefit from the annual fundraiser, and it is their fourth year in a row on the recipient's list.

'The support that we receive here is critical,' said Louise Dyer, AYSC promotions and sponsorship coordinator. 'It's a huge injection that helps us tremendously to keep programs active, up to date and helps us to hire good technical people, because that's what people are expecting.'

With over 4,200 participants from the ages of five to 69, the AYSC is one of the largest clubs in the area and has a number of needs throughout the year.

Sandy Porter, AYSC promotional and sponsor coordinator, agreed that the Hoedown has been critical in allowing the club to grow its programs and keep them up to date.

'The whole approach to teaching kids how to learn and play soccer has changed with this whole new player development path,' she said. 'It has been out for a while, but it's just starting to be fully implemented and it requires new sizes of fields and nets, new featherweight balls. We're having to buy and replace those kinds of things.'

With the new player development rules set out last year, Porter said a lot of resources is poured into technical programs, skills training and most importantly, helping their volunteer coaches to pay for certification and additional courses to upgrade their training.

Funds will also be used to support programs such as, Opti Soccer, a new free program for kids aged six to eight and also the Stinger Stars program, which provides playing opportunities to children with special needs.

In order to promote the event, the AYSC is relying on the membership base to sell tickets and the club will be promoting it at the Stinger Cup grand finale later this summer.

This year the Hoedown has been broken up into two events: the Showdown on Friday night that will feature a talent competition, headline act and silent auction; and the main event Hoedown on Saturday night with a Texas-style barbeque dinner, silent auction

and the Hoedown prospectors raffle with a \$75,000 cash grand prize, with all proceeds going to the 15 charities.

Over the last twenty years, the Hoedown has grown immensely, raising \$567,000 last year and over \$8 million since its inception.

?At the end of the day this only helps the kids,? Dyer added. ?They're going to get better quality training and hopefully have a better experience at the end of it all.?

For more information on the Magna Hoedown, visit www.hoedown.ca; or, on the AYSC, visit www.aysc.ca.