

MP Lois Brown announces 'Activate Aurora' program

By Jake Courtepatte

Sport Aurora, as well as the Canadian Sport for Life Community, gained some national attention when MP Lois Brown sang its praises in the House of Commons last Wednesday.

Brown rose in the House to make a short statement, commenting on the work done within the community to build Aurora into 'Canada's Most Active Community.'

'With the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games around the corner, Canadians are applauding their athletes for dedicating themselves to being fit and at the top of their game,' said Ms. Brown. 'Unfortunately for many, staying fit is not a part of their daily routine.'

Countering this is the vision of Sport Aurora's new 'Activate Aurora' program, designed to help educate sport and recreation leaders, volunteers of all ages, parents, children, and seniors on how to lead a healthier and more active lifestyle.

'The Town of Aurora has decided to draw a line in the sand and proclaim that they wish to become Canada's most active community,' said Ms. Brown.

That claim is no exaggeration - the goal is the year 2020.

MS. Brown continued by stating the importance of getting the entire community involved.

'Aurora is involving sports leaders, students, seniors, corporations to help the entire town become physically fit, more active, and above all, make this athletic movement sustainable.'

Over the next few years, Aurora will begin assembling the building blocks for this innovative program. A handful of projects are already in the works, mostly geared towards the younger generation.

Perhaps the most impacting project is the implementation of a PLAY Day, in which early-grade students from across the Region will join at a multi-sport facility to orient them into a healthy lifestyle in a playful fashion.

'Our vision includes increasing participation rates both within schools and outside schools,' said Sport Aurora Past-President Ron Weese, 'to not only engage more people at all ages and stages of development, but to increase the amount of physical activity in which they participate in order to meet and exceed the recommended amount of daily physical activity required.'

In the elementary school system, other projects will include a walk-to-school program and a revamped physical literacy program.

An interesting partnership has also been created between the program and Seneca College as part of an initiative to instill healthy and active life choices in young children. As Ontario's leader in early childhood education, Weese says the college is 'in a position to build physical literacy awareness not only in this community, but across the province.'

Outside of the schools, the project is looking to tackle the sedentary lifestyle in every town citizen. A communication project will seek the opinion of the general public on how to handle the problem of inactivity, an aspect that Weese has told The Auroran in the past is key to Sport Aurora's success.

You can follow the progress at www.beactiveaurora.ca.