

## New sensory hallway an opportunity for people of all ages and developmental stages at AFLC



People of all ages and developmental stages are invited to head over to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex to take in a new, stimulating sensory hallway.

The sensory hallway, the second to be created at a public facility to Aurora following a similar space dedicated at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC) in 2019, is designed to give individuals a break from their normal everyday environments and routines, says the Town.

The space helps patrons build connections through sight, sound and touch, while encouraging the redirection of overwhelming emotions or behaviours, says the Town. The hallway is geared for individuals of all ages and developmental stages.

Complete with bright colours, letters, descriptions, and prompts for physical movement, it's designed to foster the development of motor skills and exercise and features are tailored for children and adults alike.

The sensory hallway was such a great success at the SARC that we thought it would be a great opportunity to try and create more spaces for individuals who use our facilities and spread [those] throughout our complexes, says Marco De Benedictis, Community Programmer for the Town of Aurora. It offers areas where different individuals can use different skills working on physical literacy, intellectual stimulation, and having options for all different stages of development.

Decals show different ways to focus your energy and try different things. We have areas where you can do different exercises such as stretching, crouching, and crawling, and with that there's a lot of different colours that we use to capture the attention of all ages. There's hopscotch area, spinning, a [place] where you can pick a colour and follow along whether it's walking or crawling it's a special area to suit anyone who wants to use it.

The Town is keen for the newly-created space to be used in many different ways, including drop-ins, programs, services and come this spring it will prove a key space in a soon-to-be-launched adult day program operated by the Town of Aurora for individuals with disabilities.

It's definitely something that is going to be used a fair bit, says De Benedictis, noting that it's also an added bonus for upcoming winter camp programs, and for families waiting for kids taking part in ice or pool times.

Our inclusion services are definitely looking to grow, he says. We offer winter programs that are [tailored] to our specific

inclusive services, our adaptive programs, and we have three of those running in the winter. For children and youth with developmental disabilities, we are looking to launch a half-day program in the spring and definitely take a step up with our inclusion services. We're seeing a need in the community and these are just some small things we can do to help our families and our communities, offering more programs and services for them.

?This [hallway] is a pretty awesome area and it's in a quieter area of the AFLC with less commotion, so you're able to step inside, take your individual to this area, and have them focus on something to pass some time, to work on that intellectual stimulation and physical literacy, and kind of take a couple of moments to themselves. It's a nice area and it's for everybody of all ages.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter