

Skate club takes on 'legends and icons' as they celebrate 60th year



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Skating Club has been teaching local kids how to skate and 60 years later, they are still doing just that.

With their Fall and Winter 1 sessions already behind them, Winter 2 has officially kicked off for the busy skating club.

Despite a hectic few months dealing with renovations at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, the club is up and running and preparing for a busy season of competitions and their bi-annual Ice Show 'Legends and Icons' on April 5.

'We're hoping to have a lot of kids come back for that,' coach and Learn to Skate co-director, Alison Greenwood said about the ice show. 'A lot of them want to come back and get on the ice and have a skate. It's a big time for the kids. It becomes the best memory for a lot of the kids and because it's our 60th year, we'll probably do it bigger and better.'

This year the club has roughly 300 skaters registered in their program that range across all ages and ability from Learn to Skate up to advanced.

Learn to Skate students go from ages three and up and skate one to four times a week, while advanced skaters can get out on the ice three to five times a week.

Because they run the national program, Greenwood said people tend to think they are just about figure skating, but that's not necessarily true according to the long-time coach.

'We actually start at a Learn to Skate program and the initial program teaches you about edges. Most hockey players get on the ice and learn about hockey skills, we teach them skating skills,' Greenwood explained.

'So, it's inside and outside edges, how to do a proper three-turn, how to do proper stopping with both feet. We actually teach them to turn forwards and backwards, so the difference between them getting on the ice and learning to play hockey, they then come back to us and we teach them skating skills.'

But as more young female skaters turn to hockey, they are finding those core skating skills are invaluable to any player, with former national figure skater Barb Underhill's well-documented work with the NHL's Toronto Maple Leafs.

'I think girls hockey has taken off a bit, but we always seem to get them back. They go away and then we seem to get them back to learn how to skate again and then they go back to play hockey,' Greenwood added.

But the program forges ahead with a new crop of skaters each year, with several advanced skaters even making the move into coaching.

Aside from the big Ice Show, the skaters are currently readying themselves for upcoming competitions, including a big one down in Buffalo, at which the Aurora Skating Club has historically done very well.

?We go down as a team and there are about 100 kids that go and we have won the Cup there for seven years in a row, so it's a big deal.?

All in all, Greenwood said the club is open for business and stronger than ever.

?60 years in business is pretty good in this day and age. It's nice to see that we have something going on here after 60 years,? she said.

?Some kids go on and become skaters and others go on to teach and then other just do it for the fun and move on. I think the whole thing is that it has got to be fun for the kids to stay.?

For more information visit, www.auroraskatingclub.com.