

Special needs, coaching to benefit from Saturday's Hoedown



By Jeff Doner

Since its inception in 1964, the Aurora Youth Soccer Club has continuously grown to serve thousands of soccer players from ages five to 69 and has done so through the hard work of volunteers and dedicated workers.

Providing such an important service that so many in the community obviously use and enjoy, raising some extra funding has never been more important.

As one of the 25 beneficiary community partners in this Saturday's Wild, Wild West Hoedown for the third year in a row has excited many within the organization.

"I've only been with the club for three years and we've had the opportunity and privilege for the last three years consecutively to be a part of it and that's a great honour," said Louise Dyer, AYSC promotions and sponsorship coordinator. "We were quite surprised we actually got it this third year in a row, but we put a lot of effort into the program to make sure that we not only comply, but go above and beyond."

Dyer said that one of the big areas the funds will be directed to will be training new coaches, which is another high demand area with the ever-expanding number of players in the AYSC.

"Training the coaches is definitely a big one," she said. "The bigger the club, the more coaches that are required and if we want to keep our house league - which is our bread and butter - we need to keep them satisfied and provide the right training for them as well as the new development for coaches to take on some of the new formats."

Sandy Porter, volunteer coordinator for the AYSC, added there are plenty of places for the funds to be directed within the organization.

"We always talk about how one of our flagship promotions is our special needs program, which we do for free and year round," she said. "That always gets a big chunk of our funds, but the Canadian Soccer Association has released a whole new long-term player development program to hopefully better educate soccer players and help them technically get better at a young age, but it means changing fields, formats and new equipment. There will be a lot of funds that have to be directed towards that."

Porter said those changes and improvement will all have to be made by 2014, making it no simple task.

The fact that they have been names recipients for the third year in a row means smaller organizations have started looking to them

for tips on how to get involved with the Hoedown as well, which is something both said makes the event so special.

?We recognize that we're one of the bigger organizations and we're blessed with enthusiastic volunteers so we can help out in a lot of areas where the other smaller organizations might struggle and we're happy to help out,? Porter said.

Added Dyer: ?We've already had to people today approach us to say can we talk to you about how to do it.?

Porter also praised the event for getting involved and helping out so many groups within the immediate community in Aurora and throughout York Region.

?That's one of the things we tell people about the Hoedown, is it's not just the soccer club, it's all of York Region that's going to benefit, so even if you're not a soccer club member, you're money is going to benefit York Region.?

Porter said another great thing about the Hoedown is that it recruits young volunteers to get involved, which shows them what hard work can bring.

?Louise and I both have kids that are participating in ways that are doing to benefit from the Hoe Down funds and it's kind of cool,? she said. ?It's a real feel good event and I truly mean that. It's all done by volunteers and all the money is staying in our community.?

Throughout the Summer, the AYSC has been promoting the annual event, hosted by Magna International. Raffle tickets are still on sale at their location on Mary Street, while event tickets can be purchased at Jonathan's Restaurant and Neighbourhood Network.

?There seems to be a growing financial need for clubs in Aurora,? Porter said. ?But fortunately through programs like Hoedown, we're able to make sure everybody that wants to play can play regardless of whether they can afford it or not.?

For more information on Saturday's Hoedown, visit www.hoedown.ca.