

Special Olympics Aurora announced as Partners in Play participant at annual general meeting

By Jake Courtepatte

Special Olympics Ontario (SOO) Aurora was graced with their highest attendance to date last week, one that held some exciting news at the annual general meeting.

Representatives from all five of the organization's sport branches spoke about their experiences during the summer season, thanking families and volunteer coaches for their help.

A highlight was the attendance of Tess Trojan, a decorated golfer who was in Los Angeles in July for the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games. She was joined at the 7,000-athlete event by her home coach, Nicola McGovern, who was named as Team Canada's head coach for golf after success with the Aurora Eagles.

The 26-year old returned home to Aurora with a gold medal story for the crowd at the AGM.

The success of the Special Olympics program in Aurora has led to its continued growth, with the Master Ducks Swim Club announcing at the meeting the introduction of adult Special Olympics programming. SOO-Aurora Community Coordinator Nancy Black said the goal of the organization is to eliminate barriers for athletes.

?The Aurora Master Ducks will ensure that training and competitive opportunities are available to adults with intellectual disabilities. In this year of Sport in Aurora and in conjunction with the Provincial ?Partners in Play? initiative, management and team members will work closely with Special Olympics Ontario ? Aurora to ensure there are no barriers to participation this year and beyond.?

This segued into some crucial news for the organization as a whole ? Michael Chung, District Developer for SOO, announced Aurora as a ?priority community? for the Partners in Play initiative, incorporating a ?learn to play? style of programming for youth with disabilities looking to get involved.

?Since there is such a strong desire to raise awareness and to ensure that Special Olympics is part of the ?Year of Sport? celebrations, we are glad to have this opportunity to work with the Town of Aurora.?

Al Downey, Director of Parks and Recreation, voiced the town's backing of the initiative, in conjunction with the Activate Aurora project and Sport Aurora.