

Sport Aurora wants you to know ?All Kids Can Play?

By Jake Courtepatte

Calling all parents: do you, or someone you know, have a child missing out on organized sports due to financial issues?

Sport Aurora, the umbrella organization of over thirty sports programs in Aurora, is looking to help through the ?All Kids Can Play? (AKCP) initiative.

Since the program's initial launch in 2012, All Kids Can Play has raised almost \$40,000 to help children with financial barriers join organized sports in Aurora. Around half of the money has been used, helping fifty children in the community so far.

?We've been very fortunate,? said Sarah Smith, director of the AKCP program. ?We've had a lot of support from the community for the program in terms of donations coming in. So, we actually have these, sort of excess funds, that we want to distribute and need more people to come forward expressing need.?

Announced at last week's Board meeting, Sport Aurora is initiating a campaign to get the word out about the program, spearheaded by Smith. The goal is to find more children in need of financial assistance.

?We're just trying to get the information out into the community to bring more clients forward, so their kids can participate in sports.?

?Our objective is to ensure that the entire Town knows of the outreach plan so these funds get into the hands of as many financially strained families as possible,? added Sport Aurora Past President Ron Weese, ?so no child who wants to play sits on the sidelines.?

In reaching out to the community, the organization hopes to not only gain clients for the program, but that it becomes a reciprocating process to gain more funding as well.

?If we happen to garner more support as we get busier, that's great too,? said Smith. ?The more funding we receive, the more kids we can help play sports.?

Windfall Ecology Centre in Aurora is one organization that has stepped to the plate to assist the program, through their Healthy Kids Community Challenge initiative. They have provided funding to AKCP to create informative brochures to hand out in the community, as well as assisting with the distribution of the brochures.

Other donators around town have included local restaurants, Mayor Geoff Dawe's golf tournament, the Rotary Club, and various raffles. Canadian Tire's JumpStart program has also been a crucial contributor of funds.

Sport Aurora has also been in touch with Welcome Wagon, York Health, and dozens more organizations in getting the program up and running, and find the local families with children who need assistance to get into the game.

?Doctor offices, dentists offices, anybody that works with children, homeschool associations?we're just trying to reach out and get the word out to as many people as possible so they can pass along the message to apply,? said Smith.

Every dollar raised for AKCP goes directly to the children, funding up to around 80 per cent of fees for organized sports.

?For some kids playing football, that's \$600 or \$700,? said Smith. ?So, between all of our sources we can fund a good chunk of it.?

Information on the program can be found at www.sportaurora.ca, as well as the application process. You can also contact Laurie Mueller, the managing director at Sport Aurora, at managing.director@sportaurora.ca.