

Step back in time with retro games at Family First Night

Ring in the New Year by trying your hand at some classics of the past this New Year's Eve as the Town of Aurora hosts Family First Night.

A firm favourite with local families, Family First Night returns to the Aurora Family Leisure Complex on Tuesday, December 31, from 6 ? 9 p.m.

Featuring free skating and swimming, as well as popular reptile and magic shows, revellers will also be able to step back in time to try their hands at some full-size retro video games.

?Many of the elements of Family First Night stay the same year to year because of how overwhelmingly popular they are,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Supervisor for the Town of Aurora. ?We will be continuing with our free reptile shows, presented by ZooTek. We will have two magician shows this year featuring the Pickpocket Magician and, in theme with the hottest movie right now, we will have a Frozen II-branded inflatable as well as some interesting hands-on games.

?New this year, we will be moving all the spinners out of our Cycle Fit room and turning that into a retro games room. We have the original-sized arcade game of Pac Man and the original arcade game of Donkey Kong. We'll also have a life-sized Operation game. A lot of adults and parents attending this event will have memories of when they themselves played Pac Man, Donkey Kong and Operation as a kid and this is an opportunity for them to not only play it ? although it might be a challenge to see how many parents will give up their turn for their child! ? but for their child to actually experience what those infamous games were.?

The Retro Games Room has been in the works since the spring as Ms. Ware searched high and low to incorporate a new experience into the Family First Night roster. Once she had found a provider to supply the games, it was full steam ahead to make it a reality ? including finding a space for these rather large games at a recreation complex that will be packed wall to wall with demonstrations, crafts, rock climbing and other activities.

?Anything retro is really on trend right now and we do try to stay on trend, but when I came across a provider that could offer these games to us, I was so hopped up with excitement I think people had a hard time keeping up with the pace I was talking about it,? says Ms. Ware with a laugh.

Retro Games will be available all evening, as will the swimming and skating opportunities.

Reptile Shows with Zootek will take place on the hour between 6 and 8 p.m., with Magic Shows running at 6.30 p.m. and 7.45 p.m.

Children's activities will also be running throughout the evening, including the rock climbing, crafts, face painting, and inflatables.

“This is certainly a tradition in Aurora and although it is obviously celebrated in many communities there isn't, to my knowledge, any event of this scale with this number of diverse activities that are all free on New Year's Eve,” says Ms. Ware. “This is an excellent way for a family to celebrate the New Year without being out super late at night. This is the family's time and then after 9.30 or 10 p.m., that's when the adults might have their own time. But this is a coming together of the community and year after year we see families who make this their annual tradition. That's why we've gone to such great lengths to create the Retro Games Room so there really is something different.

“Even if perhaps Retro Games aren't something of your interest, come out for the feel and the sense of community. This is the community's chance to come together, reminisce about 2019 and be able to embrace the start of a brand new year.”

For more information on Family First Night, visit [aurora.ca/Thingstodo/Pages/Special Events/Family-First-Night.aspx](http://aurora.ca/Thingstodo/Pages/Special%20Events/Family-First-Night.aspx).

By Brock Weir