

Time to vote for the Minor Tigers



The U15A Aurora Tigers are one of the 12 regional finalists for the Chevrolet Good Deeds Cup.

The team began the Pink Hoodie Campaign, selling shirts for \$50, with their club logo embroidered on the torso, the person's name who purchased the hoodie on the shoulder and the written slogan, 'We Stand Together' on the back.

All proceeds are being donated to the Hockey Diversity Alliance.

This good deed initially stemmed from an incident during a quarter-final game in a tournament on the road. An opposing player uttered a racial slur to a player of colour on the Tigers. The official heard what was said and immediately stopped the game.

The opposing coach apologized across the bench.

Furious at what had occurred and prepared to bring his team off the ice, head coach Chad Connelly sought out a wiser decision. He simply told his boys to let their play on the ice do the talking.

The boys rallied together and eventually won the tournament.

But the Tigers didn't stop there. Some players and the assistant coach wanted to act.

'Around Christmastime, they wanted to create more awareness put at the forefront for people to talk about,' head coach Chad Connelly said.

'As one big family, we're standing up for each other. It was just to generate conversation. And bring awareness and let people understand that hate doesn't belong in the game. And it just organically grew from there. One of the parents on the team emailed the team manager and I and said, 'We kind of fall in line with what the Good Deeds Cup is all about.''

Normally, teams will orchestrate a plan on how to win the Good Deeds Cup. Uniquely in the Tigers' situation, the team already had the plan in place.

After applying to Chevrolet with details behind their concerted effort, the Tigers qualified as one of the finalists.

Their effort has sparked total unity within Aurora.

According to Connelly, almost half of the Aurora Minor Hockey teams ordered full sets of sweaters for their team. He has received a plethora of responses from players, coaches and parents, supporting this cause.

The U15A team will arrive to games wearing the hoodies and the parents will support the team from the stands.

?The players are making such a difference with this initiative and the players are making an impact everywhere, not just within the hockey community, but even in business with friends and family ordering sweatshirts and asking about it. Going viral even in our companies and such,? said U15A manager Nikki Posa.

On top of advocating for inclusivity in colour, Posa also speaks on the importance of a female role in a young men's hockey club.

?I myself have been managing for many years. I have two older boys who have gone through the rep system and they're done now. I think it's always a great message and the importance of women and inclusion as well in the workplace and in sport. You're seeing more and more of that,? Posa explained.

?I think it's important for these young men to really understand what is happening in society. Obviously, they are getting older. They're in high school now.?

As the Tigers continue to promote inclusion with their Pink Hoodie Campaign, you can cast your vote for the hometown boys by visiting gooddeedscup.chevrolet.ca/AuroraTigersU15A.

You may vote once per day up until April 2. The winning team will receive \$100,000 to donate to a charity of their choice.

The team's name will also be added to the Chevy Good Deeds trophy.

By Robert Belardi