

Clubs swapped for hockey sticks

Golf officials raise money for MS charity

By Jeff Bell, Times Colonist January 23, 2011

Woods and irons give way to skates and pucks next weekend as the Vancouver Island Golf Superintendents Association hosts its fourth annual charity hockey game and banquet.

The event raises money for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, which supports sufferers of an often-disabling disease of the central nervous system mostly diagnosed in people aged 20 to 50. The association is supporting MS because Pam Youell, the wife of Uplands Golf Club superintendent Brian Youell, is affected by the condition.

Saturday's activities begin with a 12:30 to 1 p.m. family skate at Bear Mountain Arena. The hockey game is from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. Things shift from the rink to the Westin Bear Mountain Golf Resort & Spa for a 5 to 6:45 p.m. reception and then a banquet from 7 to 10 p.m. There will be live and silent auctions, and a dance beginning at 10 p.m.

Admission to the hockey game is free. Banquet tickets are \$75, and special rates are available for those wishing to stay at the hotel.

Royal Oak Golf Club superintendent Greg Kowalski said the event raised \$100,000 last year. For banquet tickets, call Jana Nagy at 250-748-4452 or Dean Piller at 250-883-3636.

Winter clothing drive success

People hoping for a winter coat or a warm sweater lined up on Johnson Street Friday to share in the generosity of a caring public.

Wendy Stone of the Cool Aid Community Casual Labour Pool said the public's response to the call for donations for the third annual Winter Coat Giveaway was inspiring, and ensured that many people in need will benefit.

"It was excellent, fantastic. We had probably close to 500 coats donated, and a tremendous amount of socks and mittens and hats and gloves. There was also lots of clothing and lots of sweaters."

She said the Labour Pool continues to seek jobs for its clientele at what is often a slow time of year for the agency.

"Our busiest month is typically March, and things start picking up in February. If people have anything -- gardening, yard work, renovation projects, office, retail -- we have tonnes of skills here, lots of depth."

Contact the Labour Pool at 250-388-9296.

A few days before the Cool Aid event, about 200 people sat down to a Christmas-style dinner courtesy of the Salvation Army at its downtown shelter.

The community meal has traditionally been served on Christmas Day, but that was changed a few years ago because of the number of local groups that also put on holiday gatherings.

"A lot of other charities in the area have stepped up, so we've bumped it into January just to better serve the population, so everybody can enjoy an extra meal," said Salvation Army special projects officer Kyla Ferns.

Last week's meal followed a scheduled meeting of the Salvation Army advisory board, and all of the members stayed on to help, Ferns said. That included Victoria police Chief Jamie Graham and Rear Admiral Nigel Greenwood, commander of Maritime Forces Pacific.

New arts grant scheme launches

The deadline has just passed for the next round of Capital Regional District arts development grants, but local groups have another funding option with the creation of a new grant program by the CRD arts committee.

The IDEA (Innovate, Develop, Experiment, Access) program was announced last week as a three-year pilot project. It will give up to \$1,000 to proposals that do not fall within the qualifications for an arts development grant, but have the potential for "impact" within the region.

CRD arts committee chairwoman Vicki Saunders said a small grant can mean a lot in furthering an artistic concept, and perhaps helping organizations that put on arts-related events but do not have the arts as a primary focus. **One example is the Garth Homer Centre, which serves adults with developmental disabilities, but also stages art shows featuring its clientele.**

"IDEA grants will build the arts capacity of organizations that, until now, we've been unable to support, but which contribute to our communities in big ways," Saunders said in a statement.

The deadline for applications for the first round of IDEA grants is March 4. For more details, go to crd.bc.ca/arts or call 250-360-3205.

\$25,000 helps kids' program

The golden anniversary of RBC Royal Bank's Burnside-Tillicum branch last Friday was reason for celebration by the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children's Health.

Along with various displays and the other trappings of reaching the 50-year milestone, the branch chose the occasion to present the foundation with \$25,000 to support a children's mental health program. The funds will go to an initiative for local middle schools that helps in understanding the early signs of mental-health issues.

The RBC Foundation has now given more than \$100,000 to Queen Alexandra in support of children's mental health.

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