

SDCF grant lights up Clandeboye outdoor rink

Deadline to apply for WCGL fund, Community Grant program Feb. 28



A grant from SDCF made evening skating possible at the Clandeboye outdoor rink this winter. Deadline to apply for a grant is Feb 28.

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It's been a frigid winter to say the least and for some, that means the closest they're going to get to outdoor activity is watching Team Canada compete at the Beijing Olympics.

There's no shame in that.

But for others, it means an extra layer or two and a trip to the outdoor rink in Clandeboye to play some hockey or skate a few laps.

"Having the clubhouse open is a huge benefit for keeping our community active because it means they have a chance to come in and warm up," says Vivian Desjarlais, Clandeboye and District Recreation Association Board Member.

"On those chilly nights when people still want to stay active but need a spot to warm up those toes, and noses and fingers they come to us."

But evening skating at the outdoor rink was in jeopardy last fall when an aging hydro pole broke and toppled over.

The Selkirk & District Community Foundation (SDCF) moved quickly, granting \$11,500 to replace the old poles and install LED outdoor lighting, and provided another \$4,500 to paint the exterior of the building and buy some hockey and broomball sticks. The Foundation is accepting applications for grants now until Feb. 28.

"This wasn't a project that we planned for last year, it caught us by surprise and it really made us worry, so how lucky were we to have Selkirk & District Community Foundation jump on board and really save us," Desjarlais said.

"We were able to turn to the Foundation who came through with a substantial amount of funding for us that made this project possible. Had we not had them, I know for a fact that we would not have any evening skating this season, it just would have to be daytime because we'd have no lights."

Shauna Curtin, SDCF Board Chairperson, said supporting community groups like the Rec Association is what the Foundation is all about.

“These are the kinds of projects that really drive home what the Foundation can do for the people of our community,” Curtin said.

“We connect donors with projects that support our communities and our people. To think that we played a role in keeping the rink open in the evenings brings a smile to my face.”

Desjarlais, who grew up at the Clandeboye rink and watched her own sons learn to skate there, says the rink has always been a community gathering place and when COVID hit, it became even more so.

The clubhouse couldn't open last winter, but the ice was in and people came out in droves. She said they routinely had 30-60 people a night skating and using outdoor benches to put on their skates.

They set the lights to auto timers and let the good times roll.

“We were just wowed with what we were seeing on our video cameras,” Desjarlais said.

“We were just absolutely taken aback to see what our little rink was doing. It was really at that time we realized how important we are in the community.”

The SDCF grant allowed the rink to open up again this year, and with the clubhouse open Desjarlais said people are renting the rink out on evenings and weekends for things like birthday parties and private gatherings.

The new lights have caught the attention of neighbours, and Desjarlais said Jeanne Roswell, quite enjoys them.

“She made a comment that when they're lit up at night it's a heavenly glow over our community,” Desjarlais said.

Curtin was blown away by the reception the lights have received.

“What a great way to describe this project,” she said.

“All of us at the Foundation, and that includes the kind and caring folks that donate, are humbled by that kind of reaction. It's why we support, we want to keep doors open in the community.”

The rink is available for skating during the day, with benches available for putting on skates. The clubhouse is open Monday to Saturday from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. for skaters to warm up and the canteen is open. On Sundays, it's open from 1:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Vaccination cards are required to enter and masks are mandatory inside as well.

The SDCF is accepting grant applications for the Western Canada Games Legacy Fund and the Community Grant program now, with the deadline to apply being Feb 28. Grant applications have moved solely online. Go to sdcfa.ca for an application. Call 204-785-9755 or email selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca for more information.

The Selkirk and District Community Foundation is a charitable organization that provides financial support to charitable causes and agencies in the region, which includes Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. Gifts from donors enable the Foundation to support countless groups and individuals in our community. The Foundation has given in excess of \$3.4 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations during its 25 years. For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.785.9755.