



PHOTO: PHIL LAMEIRA

Former TV reporter and current BMN columnist Glenn Cochrane donates his skates to Brent Deakin who started a 'Skate Library', a program where students can "checkout skates" at their schools for the day or for the season.

TDSB's Skate Library needs your old hockey skates

by Phil Lameira

In 2008, Liam Deakin's class at Duke of Connaught PS was unable to go skating because only six kids in the class had skates. Liam asked his dad, Brent Deakin, if there was something they could do to help. His dad gladly donated two pairs of skates to the class, but it still wasn't enough.

After contacting Goodwill, Deakin was able to gather up 100 pair of skates of various sizes which were donated to Duke. Many of those were in desperate need of sharpening so Deakin teamed up with Play It Again Sports on Gerrard Street and got a great deal on the sharpening plus a quick turnaround.

"We called it the 'Skate Library' because kids could come and sign out a pair of skates for the season," said Deakin. Students were now able to go skating as part of gym class as well as enjoy them on evenings and weekends with their friends.

Because of the success of the program at Duke, Deakin introduced it to the Toronto District School Board's Health and Physical Education Department. They quickly jumped at the idea and after consultation with all the schools, 60 of them submitted request applications for a total of over 3,600

pairs of skates.

Goodwill, once again, helped with donating the initial 300 pairs, and Skate Libraries started opening throughout schools in the city.

With skate sharpening being a big cost at \$5 per pair, TDSB purchased two skate sharpening machines and had the manufacturer train teachers and students on how to use them. One of those machines was installed at Birchmount CI.

"Now we have many kids that have a pair of skates they can use for the entire season [and] the only stipulation is that they return them in March," said Deakin. "Next season they can sign out another, bigger, pair." Each school deals with its own sign in/out procedure. Duke uses a paper system where students sign their names as a promise to return the skates.

The program is still in need of hockey skates to fulfill all school requests and Deakin is asking for donations of skates sizes 1 to 12. The program is limited to hockey skates at present.

Skates can be dropped off at Duke of Connaught PS located at 70 Woodfield Rd. or at Birchmount Collegiate Institute (contact Chris Rhora). Deakin is also willing to pick-up the skates from you. He can be emailed at skatelibrary@primus.ca.

Police shinny facedown at Kew Gardens to benefit killed officer

Two teams of Toronto's finest will hit the ice of the Kew Gardens rink on Feb. 26 at 10 a.m. to play for bragging rights, but more importantly to help benefit the family of Sgt. Ryan Russell, who was killed last month in the line of duty.

For some of the officers from 55 Division, this will be all the more meaningful because Russell's father, also a police officer, worked

out of 55 for many years.

A number of organizations have stepped up to the plate to make this game possible including Maple Leaf Entertainment. However, the organizers are still looking for sponsors or anyone wishing to participate financially or otherwise in this special event.

For further information, please call Gene Domagala 416-691-5229.

WHAT DISTURBS OUR BLOOD

A Son's Quest to Redeem the Past

by James FitzGerald

-Winner of the Writers' Trust of Canada Non-Fiction Prize 2010

Meet James FitzGerald, February 9th, 7:30pm

James will be reading from his book and there will be time for questions and discussion following. All are welcome.

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For many Canadians, their annual RRRSP contribution creates visions of a windfall when the tax refund cheque arrives in late spring. It makes great sense to leverage that refund into something that will pay yourself forward. It's the concept of "pay it forward" but applied to yourself.



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