



[There's only one way to find out if NHLers are as skilled as they appear to be: join them on the ice.](#)

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By Derek Jory

During the 3rd annual Hockey Helps the Homeless tournament, which will be held in Vancouver at UBC Thunderbird Arena on Friday, November 25, 2011, hockey fans will be face to face with the likes of Greg Adams, Garth Butcher, Mark Lofthouse, Gary Nylund, Moe Lemay and Larry Melnyk.

The 10-team tournament, a fundraiser for RainCity Housing and Support Society and Lookout Society, has raised \$165,000 since it began and its been raising the level of competition each year as well.



Nineteen former NHLers will lace up their skates against budding superstars who just never got their big break, as in average joes like you and I, looking to support a great cause and dish out some elbows to some greats at the same time.

David Fine is a founding committee member of the Vancouver branch who helps oversee the yearly event and he can't wait for puck drop in what promises to be another fantastic tournament.

"It's a very personal experience because you don't just stand in line and get a picture," said Fine. "You're in the dressing room with the players, you're playing with them, you have dinner with them afterwards, so it's a very casual and natural way to meet and spend time with NHL players, who have great stories to tell."

Fine, born in Canada, spent time in London before returning to Canada a few years ago and upon settling in Vancouver he realized how big of an issue homelessness is. He was inspired to do something about it and, as a

hockey fan, he paired his passion for Canada's game with a passion to end homelessness.

Hockey Helps the Homeless began in Toronto in 1996 and it's now a tournament played throughout six cities in Canada; the fundraising goal in Vancouver this year is \$200,000 and that money goes directly to help organizations help others.



Hockey Helps the Homeless had directly impacted RainCity Housing and Support Society and Lookout Society, but there are no jumbo cheque presentations. The funds are put towards responding to their organizational needs through support for capital projects and the purchase items that truly make a difference.

"When I got here, the issue of homelessness to me seemed quite in your face, you really felt like this city had a problem, and yet the beauty and the city and the wealth of the city seemed totally in conflict with the idea that there would be homeless people to the extent that there are.

"We're doing what we can to raise money and awareness; a lot of people are aware of the homeless issue in Canada and in Vancouver in particular, but by connecting it with a popular event like NHL hockey and alumni, it just raises the profile and the legitimacy of the concern."

[Click here to learn more about Hockey Helps the Homeless](#) and be sure to drop by UBC Thunderbird Arena Friday to see how the average joes stack up against retired NHLers.

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