

Hockey Helps the Homeless hits the ice in April



Posted Jan 26, 2012 By Blair Edwards

EMC News - Hockey Helps the Homeless will host its second-annual charity hockey tournament after the event was almost put on ice due to a lack of community support.

Earlier this month, organizers were forced to postpone the annual charity hockey games because of a lack of interest from participants and volunteers.

But interest in the Hockey Helps the Homeless tournament in Ottawa has revived ever since the media reported on the charity's organizing problems.

"We actually have an organizing committee of 10 people," said Gary Scullion, executive director of Hockey Helps the Homeless. "Unbelievable."

The event will be held at the Bell Sensplex on April 20, and organizers hope to raise \$150,000 from the event.

Former Ottawa Senators Brad Marsh and Laurie Boschman will play in the tournament and are organizing "an outstanding lineup" of NHL alumni to participate in the event, with two NHL alumni per team.

DISAPPOINTING

Hockey Helps the Homeless is an annual event played in major cities across Canada that allows hockey enthusiasts to play three games on a team with NHL alumni, such as former Ottawa Senators Laurie Boschman and Brad Marsh.

For the price of a \$300 registration fee, participants receive a team jersey with their name on the back and an invitation to a dinner and a silent auction.



The tournament raises between \$150,000 to \$200,000 in cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, with 35 per cent of the money used to pay to run the tournament.

But Ottawa was a different story, said Scullion.

"We had a lot of trouble getting it off the ground in Ottawa," said Scullion. "We had trouble getting participants for the event."

The first event staged in Ottawa only managed to raise \$13,000, with the money going to the Ottawa Mission, money used for renovations at its Waller Street shelter.

The event also had trouble putting together a volunteer organizing committee, leaving one of the charity's full-time employees the task of running most of the event.

Two years later the charity again had trouble attracting volunteers to help run the charity tournament.

Last August, only one prospective volunteer showed up for the kick-off meeting for Ottawa's Hockey Helps the Homeless tournament.

"It was quite disappointing," said Scullion. "We were thinking of postponing or cancelling it. We just wanted to regroup."

But ever since news of the charity's organizing problems was made public, Scullion's phone has been ringing off the hook, with interest from both participants and volunteers.

"The interest is coming in fast and furious now," he said.

Dave Edgecomb, a Kanata man, has volunteered to take over as chair of the Ottawa tournament.

The tournament will probably ice eight men's teams and four co-ed recreational teams, said Scullion, with two former NHL players on each team.



It costs \$300 per individual or \$3,600 for a team to register for the tournament, which pays for a lunch and formal dinner, an NHL-calibre jersey and socks and the opportunity to live a hockey fan's dream, said Scullion.

Anyone interested in registering for the event or volunteering their time to help on the organizing committee should email [gs@](mailto:gs@hockeyhelpsthehomeless.com)

hockeyhelpsthehomeless.com.

Players can fundraise using the Hockey Helps the Homeless website: hockeyhelpsthehomeless.com, to cover the entry costs, said Scullion.

Participants can also register a team or individual by sending a cheque to Hockey Helps the Homeless, care of Gary Scullion, 7030 Woodbine Ave., Suite 500, Markham, Ont., L3R 6G2 or by registering online at www.hockeyhelpsthehomeless.com

For more information call 1-905-943-4250, ext. 3522.

"We're counting on Ottawa, a great hockey town, to work with us to make a difference in the lives of Ottawa's homeless," said Scullion.

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