

Teams honour Cameron Smith

Blair Edwards

February 4, 2010

KANATA - It's been more than four years since the death of Cameron Smith.

On Nov. 12, 2005, the 13-year-old W. Erskine Johnston Public School student was killed in a traffic accident, after he was ejected from his seat in a sports utility vehicle rollover on Hwy. 417 near Moodie Drive.

In the days that followed, his friends, family and teammates on his bantam B minor hockey team, the Kanata Titans, grieved over their loss.

Garry Brownrigg was a bantam convener for the Kanata Minor Hockey Association at the time.

"I looked at how his teammates were suffering, the people who knew him were suffering, the people who meant something to him – something had to be done," said the Kanata man.

Brownrigg and a few others decided to organize a hockey game in Cameron's honour, with the money raised going into a bursary to help poor families outfit their children to play hockey, the game Cameron loved.

The following year, eight teams competed in the Cameron Smith Friendship Tournament; a year later, it grew into a 16-team event.

Now, in its final year, the bantam B tournament will boast 32 teams from Ontario and Quebec, coming to play at the Jack Charron Arena and the Kanata Recreation Complex in Glen Cairn from Feb. 5 to 7.

"We've done that because it would have been Cameron's final year in minor hockey," said Brownrigg. "We thought it was the right time to bring closure to achieve our goal."

So far, the tournament has raised \$65,000 for the Cameron Smith Memorial Fund.

Organizers hope the final year will bring in another \$35,000, providing \$100,000 in capital for the trust fund.

"We are very very close," said Brownrigg.

The event raises money from corporate and private sponsors as well as money from:



Teams honour Cameron Smith. Friends, family and community members will gather one last time at the Jack Charron Arena from Feb. 5 to 7 for the Cameron Smith Friendship Tournament. The tournament was held every year from 2005 to 2010, when Cameron, left, would have left minor hockey. *File photo*

* Karaoke night at the Jack Charron Arena on Feb. 5, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., admission is \$10 per person, must be 19 years or older to attend.

* Cameron Smith Pancake Breakfast run by the Kanata Volunteer Firefighters, held in the Kanata Sports Club at the Jack Charron Arena from 8 to 11 a.m. Cost is \$4 per person.

* Cameron Smith Bake Sale, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Kanata Recreation Complex, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., proceeds will be shared with the Capital City Condors, a team of young players from across Ottawa who have physical and developmental disabilities.

* Cameron Smith Chili Challenge at the Kanata Recreation Centre from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with amateur and cordon bleu chefs competing for the top prize. Admission is \$2 for four tastings.

HELPING KIDS

Every year, money from the fund is donated to the KMHA and the Kanata Girls Hockey Association to assist poor families outfit and register their children to play hockey.

So far the fund has helped 10 disadvantaged children to play hockey.

"Bursaries are from the interest of the capital," Brownrigg said. "So it's a legacy fund and will remain there forever."

This year's tournament expanded to the Kanata Recreation Complex, where the event's silent auction will be held.

"We simply didn't have enough room," said Brownrigg, adding that the tournament has grown in popularity over the past four years.

"We could have fielded 48 teams this year," he said. "It's become a very successful and a very well recognized tournament in the local area."

PEOPLE'S CHOICE NOMINATION

The Smith family have nominated the Cameron Smith Memorial Fund committee for a Kanata Chamber of Commerce's People's Choice Award this year, as best non-profit organization in Kanata.

"It was very nice," said Brownrigg. "It was very touching."

The organizers of this year's tournament are hoping to attract a big crowd.

"We'd really like to encourage those who knew Cameron, his friends, teammates and those in the community who knew him and his family to join us for the final Cameron Smith Friendship Game on Feb. 7, so there's not an empty seat in the house," he said.

The Friendship Game will be held on Feb. 7, starting at 1 p.m. at the Jack Charron Arena, and will be attended by Cameron's parents and local dignitaries.

There is no admission charge to attend the tournament.

Brownrigg said the tournament organizers are working on bringing an Ottawa Senator to attend the game.

Over the years, Brownrigg said he has been touched by the generosity of the community.

In 2008, a team from North Bay, Ont. presented the tournament organizers an unexpected cheque for \$200.

Last year, Donna Therrien, a mother of a Kanata minor hockey player, challenged parents on all bantam teams in the KMHA, to donate a quarter each time their team scored, raising \$168 for the memorial fund.

"The general support we have received has been outstanding," said Brownrigg. "We really thank and appreciate everybody who've helped us and supported us to make this a successful tournament in Cameron's

honour.”

blair.edwards@metroland.com

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