

The Nor West Recreation Centre/Arena began its life as a dream of a few local residents. They shared this dream with other community members and eventually, a group of volunteers began organizing numerous events including the selling of bricks and walkathons. Many families spent Saturdays, young to old alike, walking the walkathon routes in order to raise funds and miraculously, one day, that goal was reached and construction began on our own NorWest Arena. As the arena opened for its first hockey event, there was a regeneration in the community. Not only for the residents of Oliver Paipoonge but for the whole surrounding rural area. The volunteers and residents had made their dream a reality!

What began as a group of local residents wanting to give their children a place to play the national game of hockey has surged into a yearly average of 200 youth registering to participate in weekly hockey games. Each week 100 adults involved in various men's hockey organizations use the facilities for their games. These adults were the youngsters that began playing hockey at the Nor West Arena, on opening day, and have been avid users of the arena since. Tournaments, such as the Robins/Elks occur on a yearly basis.

The Nor West Arena was the initial hockey home of the Staal brothers, who have continued to support our community events over the years. A great moral boost for all the youth who dream of making hockey their future.

When the hockey season comes to a close in the spring, the recreation centre hosts numerous dog shows, showcasing dogs of all sizes and breeds. The staff is presently investigating the possibility of organizing future trade shows.

The Nor West Recreation Centre/Arena has been pivotal to the health of our families and community as a whole. This has never become more evident than in the past year, the 2020 Covid-19 year. Unable to host a full year of hockey events, for the young and old, has brought to light how central to our families, these hockey events were. Anything that brings families and communities together, results in a strength and solidarity that has been sorely missed by all, even those that do not usually take part in these events. Our children need that outlet of energy, the bonding with other players, the learning experience of working as a team, the lesson that win or lose we have done our "best". This is their first step to becoming productive, well rounded adults.

As our arena has grown over the past years, we have now exploded to become the home of the Kam River Fighting Walleye Junior A League. They have proven to us that there are no limits as to where this partnership can go. In a very short year they have done spectacular things for our community, by bringing exceptional youth into the homes of billeting families, increased hotel room rentals, and the future expansion of food vendors. They are bringing prosperity to the community and will bring the Nor West Recreation Centre to new heights.

The possibility of hosting a NHL preseason hockey game would escalate the hockey fervor in the whole region. I anticipate that this hockey game would go a long way to dissipating all of the COVID-19 frustrations of 2020. The Nor West arena requires an update of their electrical system, the installation of an electronic timekeeping score board, additional stands on the north wall and the replacement of the arena glass with updated safety glass to ensure that all spectators and players are safe and winning this contest would ensure this work takes place immediately.

Our community is very proud of the Nor West Recreation Centre and Arena. A dream come true all those year ago and the center of our families activities during the long winter months.

One word to describe our Nor West Recreation Centre/Arena - PRICELESS!!

Mayor Lucy, Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge