

Challenger Accessible Baseball Diamond a great addition Bolton Camp

BY SYLVIA JONES

On July 10th, I had the pleasure of visiting Bolton Camp to help officially open the Challenger Baseball Diamond. On hand was the Caledon Challenger Program, the Bolton Braves Baseball Association, Jays Care Foundation, Town of Caledon and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to mark the occasion.

The new baseball diamond will serve as the home for the Caledon Challenger Baseball team and includes accessible dugouts and wheelchair friendly surfaces. Challenger Baseball provides children and youth with cognitive and/or physical disabilities to play baseball. No score is kept during the game and able-bodied 'Buddies' are assigned to each participant. These 'Buddies' assist the Challenger players in the game by pushing their wheelchairs or providing protection for the Challenger player from batted balls.

The new diamond was made possible thanks to a \$150,000 funding from the Jays Care Foundation and a partnership with the TRCA and Town of Caledon. Jays Care made the night a special event by outfitting the players in jerseys and hats, walk up songs and play by play coverage.

The accessible baseball diamond is an excellent example of what can be done when private and public organizations work collaboratively to bring positive change to our community. As the newly appointed Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, it is exciting to see fantastic initiatives like this move forward. It is also a key step in the Toronto Region and Conservation Authority's plan to revitalize Bolton Camp. Bolton Camp was a campsite operated by Family Services Toronto but was closed in 1999. The TRCA's plan includes reconstructed cabins which can accommodate pop-up shops, studios, programs or meetings, and other multi-purposes spaces as well as a trail which was opened announced in honour of Murray Stewart thanks to the support of the Rotary Club of Bolton.

I encourage anyone who knows someone with an intellectual or physical disability to look into registering for Caledon Challenger Baseball. Visit www.boltonbravesbaseball.com to learn more.

If you have any questions regarding provincial issues please do not hesitate to contact my office at 519-941-7751, email Sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org or visit my website www.sylviajonesmpp.ca