

Caledon has plenty of winter programs to offer with recreation facilities reopening

By Rob Paul

As recreation facilities begin to reopen to the public as part of the Province's loosening of COVID-19 restrictions on January 31, the Town of Caledon will begin to once again offer in-person programming.

With indoor programming resuming, Caledon will offer winter programming across 15 different facilities in Bolton, Caledon East, and Mayfield. Programming ranges from seniors and adults of all ages all the way down to newborns. Virtual programs will continue to be offered.

Among the programs, there are four different categories with aquatics, fitness, skating, and general interest programs.

Swimming lessons offer various levels for age groups between four months and older teenagers with all levels offered including lifeguard training.

Skating lessons are also available for children between three and 13 years old. Among the different lessons offered are preschool level, youth, low-ratio, private, and hockey skills and drills.

Fitness has a wide variety of different programming with family (six years old and up), youth (11-17), adult, and senior sessions that covers everything from Zumba, to meditation, to yoga.

The general interest programming offers a more diverse set of programming for children ages six to 16, adults, and all age programs too.

For kids, there's karate, taekwondo, games and animation programming (virtual), iPad video game creation (virtual), HTML: website design (virtual), virtual reality character design, adventures in interactive programming, and mobile app development. Adults have the option of ballroom dance as well paint night (virtual) which is available to anyone eight and older.

There are also seasonal camps being offered such as PA Day camp and March Break camp for children ages four to 12.

The difficulty of staying on top of programming while switching between both in-person and virtual as the Province allows has been eased by adapting the vast majority of programs to be flexible with either option.

"We continue to adapt our programs and services through the various Provincial regulations/changes," said Jessica Stovin Manager of Community Recreation for the Town of Caledon. "We have grown to offer indoor, outdoor and virtual programs and activities, allowing for flexibility despite regulations. Recently, we were able to transition in-person programs to outdoors for the duration of the closure."

The most popular winter programming offered by the Town is no shocker given how much Canadians love being on ice, that's what's made the move back to in-person recreation so big for staff at facilities.

"Learn to skate lessons are always very popular during the winter months. Skating can be lots of fun and a great social activity. Having an instructor teach a few techniques to new skaters like balancing, stopping and turning can really go a long way in making the experience even more enjoyable. Skaters can take their new skills to their local outdoor rinks too."

The ability to continue to offer residents of Caledon virtual programming throughout the pandemic has been met with admiration because it's allowed many people in the community to continue to connect and have something to look forward to.

?Virtual programs have been very well-received during the most recent closure,? Stovin said. ?We took some of our traditional general interest programs and (depending on the program) offered them outdoor or online. For example, we created art kits available for curbside pickup so that those registered in ?Intro to Art? could continue to follow weekly virtual classes at home until regulations allowed and it was safe to return to Town facilities.?

With the shift back to in-person at the recreation facilities, the recreation department is thrilled to be able to see the community again while providing the programming residents love and still giving the option of virtual programs.

?Recreation and wellness programs are beneficial in so many ways,? said Stovin. ?We are very excited and looking forward to seeing residents participating in programs, working out in our fitness centres, heading to their local arena or going for a swim. We have worked hard to put protocols in place to ensure participants and staff are as safe as possible and continue to feel comfortable in our programs. Registration remains open for some programs?virtual options will remain available.

?With all the closures over the past two years, we are excited to open our doors and resume programs once again?not one specific program, rather, all. We look forward to seeing familiar and new faces.?

To participate in indoor programming, residents must have proof of vaccination. Visit caledon.ca/recprograms for more information and to explore current offerings and for information about learn to skate and rinks, visit caledon.ca/skate.