

Hundreds gather to celebrate opening of Reese's Rink in Caledon East

Special message from NHL superstar Connor McDavid part of opening ceremony

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There's a new outdoor ice rink in Caledon, and it's a truly special place.

On February 17, hundreds of people gathered outside the Caledon East Community Complex (CECC) to celebrate the grand opening of Reese's Rink, a new outdoor ice rink dedicated to the memory of Reese Meyer.

Meyer was a beloved Caledon resident and hockey player who sadly passed away from a cancerous brain tumour at the age of 14.

Meyer's dad, Glenn, mom Jen, and sister Avalon, were joined by Caledon Mayor Annette Groves, Caledon Council, and Dufferin-Caledon MP Kyle Seeback at the grand opening ceremony.

Among the crowd at the ceremony were members of Meyer's Caledon Hawks hockey team and their families, and tremendous support from the Caledon community at large.

Groves started the ceremony at 11 a.m. with a speech, noting the amazing sunny weather Caledon was experiencing last Saturday.

"The reason that sun is shining is Reese? he's making sure we have the perfect day to do this," said Groves. "It's my pleasure to welcome you to the grand opening of a very special outdoor rink? what a wonderful turnout this is and what a great honour it is to see so many people here to honour and pay respect to Reese."

Groves said the new outdoor rink is a wonderful way to have Meyer's legacy live on. She said when Caledon residents gather for games, skating, and fun on the new community rink, they will think of Meyer.

Meyer's dad Glenn spoke after Groves and thanked all in attendance for taking the time to come out and honour his son. He thanked the Town of Caledon for all its work in the revitalization of the CECC and the addition of Reese's Rink.

"I'd like to thank our community for seeing it fit to honour Reese this way," said Glenn. "It's heartwarming knowing it's your voice and your desire behind the naming of this rink."

Glenn said Meyer would have loved to have an outdoor rink in Caledon East. He said there's nothing more welcoming to a parent who's lost a child than to hear their name spoken.

"Knowing that others think of him as we do, hearing of this rink's popularity already and hearing his name spoken in relation to it? I can say it's like music to us? it's the most beautiful song we've ever heard," said Glenn.

Glenn said the recreation centre in Caledon East has always been, and always will be, the most special place to him. It's where he first taught his children to skate, and where Meyer began his hockey journey. Glenn said being a trainer behind the bench gave him some amazing memories and allowed him to make deeply meaningful friendships.

Through hockey, Glenn said Meyer learned the value of teamwork, determination, dedication and resilience. He said he developed many skills and positive character traits through team play and community involvement.

Glenn said his son would want to be remembered for what he stood for.

“His legacy is an important lesson and reminder about unconditional love, loving yourself so that you can love others (and) caring for your family and friends, teammates, and community,” said Glenn. “Learn to win and lose with grace, courage and strength while being humble. Don't sweat the little things, be present every day, appreciate the good, be kind and set goals. Have fun, laugh, make memories?”

Meyer was always a quick learner, said Glenn, who said his life was an opportunity to show us love, acceptance, wisdom and bravery. He said Reese's Rink is a place where Meyer's name will ring out and be remembered.

“Let Reese's Rink bring endless joy, laughter, exercise, fresh air, and family time? perhaps even love at first sight,” said Glenn. “Less time looking at our phones? and more time connecting, making lasting friendships and memories.”

After Glenn's speech, a special video message from NHL superstar Connor McDavid was played.

“I just want to send my deepest and most sincere condolences? I'm tremendously honoured to be asked to share a few words on the big occasion,” said McDavid. “I congratulate the Town of Caledon on the completion of Reese's Rink, what an accomplishment? I hope it brings peace, joy and love to the community in Reese's honour. What a great way to celebrate such a warrior like he was and keep his memory alive.”

After the video message, there was a ceremonial puck drop with members of Meyer's Caledon Hawks hockey team.

Community members in attendance enjoyed skating, hockey, refreshments, and socializing in the sun at Reese's Rink when the ceremony was complete.