

Kurling For Kids coming to Sherbrooke

By Matthew McCully

On March 28 the Sherbrooke Curling Club will host a special Kurling for Kids (K4K) fundraising event to support the Fondation du CHUS with the goal of raising money to help sick children in the region.

Since 1999, K4K has been dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families by supporting children's hospitals, namely the CHU Sainte-Justine and Montreal Children's Hospital. For the first time, the K4K fundraiser has expanded its fundraising efforts outside the Montreal area. All funds raised at the upcoming Sherbrooke K4K will be used to purchase equipment for the pediatrics, maternity and neonatology departments at the Fleurimont Hospital of the CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS.

"The Sherbrooke Curling Club is honored to be the first curling centre in the Estrie region to become a member club of Kurling For Kids," explained Dwayne Fowler, President of the Estrie Regional Curling Association and organizer of the K4K at the Sherbrooke Curling Club.

"The Fondation du CHUS and its af-

filiated hospitals are the health care pillars of our community, so we are extremely appreciative that they will be the beneficiaries of our fundraising efforts," Fowler added.

"It's not a competition," Fowler went on to explain. "It's just for fun, it gets people involved," he said. "This will not be your typical curling bonspiel," Fowler said.

So far 12 teams are registered to play in the Sherbrooke K4K.

"They don't have to be curlers," Fowler said, adding the event can be an opportunity to give the sport a try, all for a good cause.

According to Fowler, 12 teams have signed up to play so far. There is still space for a few more, he said. "The earlier they get involved, the earlier they can start fundraising," Fowler said.

The teams pay to enter the K4K event and are also encouraged to gather donations. Each team and player is listed on the K4K website. Supporters can click on a team or an individual and make a donation.

Fowler said for its first year the Sherbrooke Club has set a fundraising goal of \$10,000.

So far, they are almost halfway there.

On the day of the event, in addition to the curling there will also be a silent auction, raffle tickets and other opportunities to raise money.

"The hospital is right here on our doorstep," Fowler said. While there is no shortage of fundraisers asking for support, Fowler said this event is special because it has a specific goal in mind.

"This is not just for sick children. This is raising money for two specific pieces of equipment," Fowler said, adding the timing for the K4K coincides with the new mother-child centre being built at the CHUS Fleurimont.

According to Fowler, the K4K got started when Robert Sears, now president of the charity, had a daughter who received a lifesaving operation in Montreal.

The following year, Sears wanted to give back, so he asked some friends to bring \$5 and participate in a curling tournament.

Since its humble beginnings, the annual event has raised \$3.7 million.

"This is not just a curling thing. It's not just a sports story. It's about community," Fowler said.

On March 28, the K4K participants

will each play two six-end games at the Sherbrooke Curling Club. The theme is superheroes, so the players and supporters are invited to dress up if they like.

There will be a light lunch, and then a sit-down supper.

There will be plenty of prizes and games throughout the day, Fowler said, and there will be a presentation in the evening announcing the amount raised at the K4K event.

"The actual fundraiser doesn't end until April," Fowler said, so even people who are late to the game can still support the initiative.

"I can see this growing," Fowler said, hoping to make the Sherbrooke K4K an annual event.

While the annual Pie Bonspiel is happening the same weekend at the Lennoxville Curling Club, Fowler said he reached out and members there will make an effort to support the K4K in any way they can.

For more information about the K4K or how to donate or get involved, visit the website <https://kurlingforkids.org/>.