

Golf tourney to help hockey hopefuls

Terence Leung, For Neighbours

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Growing up in the Little Bay Islands of Newfoundland, Rex Tucker was a hockey fan who found himself in an area with no rink, hockey association, coaching or money to play the game.

A few decades later, Tucker is now in Calgary and working as a power skating and hockey instructor for about 1,000 adult and minor hockey players. He says he's grateful to be in a profession he is passionate about and plans on giving disadvantaged youth a better chance to play hockey with his first gold tournament fundraiser through his Kids Hockey Advancement Society.

"I wanted to do something good in the world and create some goodwill in the hockey community," says Tucker, who recalls getting parcels over the Christmas seasons as a child from his aunt in Ontario filled with hockey equipment. With his father a fisherman and his mother a schoolteacher turned stay-at-home mom, funds to buy shinny hockey equipment was limited.

Even with his skates and stick, opportunities to play were hampered by the ice quality on outdoor ponds.

"I know there are a lot of kids who need help even in the affluent city. I want to help out some families, put a smile on kids and some parents with some equipment and hockey programs. I think it's a good way to have some fun and a fun day on the links."

He started the idea of large scale fundraising last fall after awarding scholarships through his Tucker Hockey programs for deserving clients and decided to something on a larger scale.

"I love the game. I'm in something I'm passionate about. I'm not in it for the money to retire in the Bahamas before I'm 50," says Tucker, who left his day job as a business executive in his late 20's to focus on a hockey career.

"I thought 'Gee, if I had an opportunity with a rink and gear, coaching and parents who had the money, I could make it somewhere with the skills, drive, talent and my love of the game.' I never had the opportunity and it's all hypothetical, but I'm hoping it won't be for the kids who can't play."

For more information about Tucker's golf tournament with guest and Calgary Flames announcer Brad Beesley on June 11, visit <http://www.tuckerhockey.com/golftournament.html>. The final day for golfer registration is June 6.