

Leisure Complex hosts grand "homecoming"



By Brock Weir

Long-time members of Club Aurora hailed a "homecoming" of sorts as the Aurora Family Leisure Complex officially re-opened on Saturday.

Although low-key compared to the official ribbon cutting held at the facility last October, Saturday's celebrations got off to an early start, with a pick-up basketball game organized between Council and municipal staff to inaugurate the new gymnasium.

As families, new and long-time members, and even the curious, flowed through the Industrial Parkway North doors, residents were impressed by what they were able to see.

"My daughter has been coming for about a year and she brought me here today," said Lorella PannoZZo, after her first workout at Club Aurora, the municipal-owned fitness centre. "My son plays hockey, so we have been at the Complex for quite a while watching him play hockey, but the new facilities are beautiful. Look at the view. It is so motivating and I am actually going to start coming now."

Her daughter, Ilenia, has a similar review, noting the spacious workout area, improved equipment and, importantly to her, new mirrors.

"The transition was pretty smooth, and I didn't have a problem with it," said Ilenia, adding with a laugh, she had some concerns about some of the open fitness areas. "If I use it, I don't want everybody looking at me, but other than that everything else is great."

These concerns were noted by Club Aurora supervisors, who said the open glass of the aerobics room adjacent to the main entrance was the one complaint they were hearing as people simply stopped to watch. While that can be easily remedied with curtains, they said members were happy to be back in their old home.

"It is like a homecoming," they said. "There have been lots of tours and lots of questions, and it has been great. Very little negative. Everybody is excited because of the windows and it is nice and bright."

Year-long member Will McConnell echoed these sentiments, saying the newly renovated building is a "huge improvement" in terms of space, equipment and atmosphere.

"It is airy," said Mr. McConnell. "Clearly there were some false starts, but the staff have been very good about all that; handling it and spreading the information as soon as they could. All of that was handled really well, but it was unfortunate it didn't happen as

everyone planned.?

Added long-time member Jay Fancie: ?One of the beauties of this gym is because it is a Town-owned gym, there are people of all ages, shapes and sizes. It is very social and very friendly. It is not like the Muscle Beach in a lot of the private places, and there is a very strong sense of community.?

When The Auroran stopped in upstairs at The Loft, the new youth space in the Complex, siblings Lydia and Reuben Walker were in the midst of a heated game of table hockey as their father, Bob, looked on. He said he was ?totally impressed? with what he had seen so far.

?The youth room is great, and it is a great concept with friendly staff,? he said. ?The only thing I would complain about is I wish it was more competitively priced to places such as L.A. Fitness. They need to check out their pricing structure.?

As Reuben came over, victory in hand, he added: ?This place is fun and at least this area is free. There are lots of games to play.?
Both brother and sister said they were looking forward to coming back.