

CHARITY FUNDRAISER



BRUCE URQUHART Sentinel-Review

The Woodstock Navy Vets are seconds from scoring one of their seven first-period goals. While the Junior C players overwhelmed the team of Woodstock Police Service and Oxford OPP officers early in the game, the later periods were more even.

Memorial hockey game pays tribute to Hawkins family

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WOODSTOCK — After dominating the local police in a lopsided first period, the Woodstock Navy Vets adopted a kinder approach for the rest of Saturday's Hawkins Family Memorial Hockey Game.

Of course, that change in strategy involved the Navy Vets giving their opponents — a team comprised largely of members of the Woodstock Police Service and the Oxford OPP — a player or two. Ironically, the final result — decided in a shootout after a frantic final few minutes — was a 12-11 police win. Of course, by that point, no one was really paying attention to the score.

The real result of Saturday's game was the approximately \$3,000 raised for the Hawkins Family Memorial Fund. Collected through goodwill donations, raffle sales and other draws, the tally was more than co-organizer Michelle Murphy had originally expected.

"This is our first fundraiser (for 2010)," the Oxford OPP constable said during the game. "The Navy Vets kind of approached us and said they'd be happy to do this."

In addition to being a fund-

raiser, the event's organizers decided to incorporate educational components to the evening by inviting the Woodstock Fire Department and other community volunteers. The Woodstock firefighters hosted a display about carbon monoxide safety, offering instructive pamphlets while bringing examples of carbon monoxide detectors.

"We're just hoping people have fun, and we want to keep the Hawkins family memory alive."

Michelle Murphy

"Anyone who has questions about carbon monoxide or fire safety, we can provide answers," firefighter Trevor Ford said.

The other exhibits in the foyer of the Woodstock District Community Complex included a display from Oxford County EMS and a child fingerprinting service by the Ingersoll Block Parents, who were also offering identification kits.

"A lot of parents have issues with ... identification kits on computers," said Kim deGraaf, the

recruitment officer with the block parents. "With these, it stays with the parents. It goes nowhere else."

The foyer also boasted a display about the Laurie Hawkins Memorial Camp, a summer program for children with mild to moderate behavioural difficulties offered by the Elgin-Oxford Child and Youth Centre. Laurie Hawkins, a former board member, was heavily involved in this day camp program.

"It was a natural (to name the camp in her honour)," said Deb Donovan, the centre's intake centre. "It was an easy transition for us."

In December 2008, police and the Woodstock community were shocked by the loss of Constable Laurie Hawkins, her husband Richard and their two children Cassandra and Jordan. All were killed by carbon monoxide poisoning in their home.

The game did not start well for the police team, which included North Bay firefighter Derek Gignac, Laurie's brother. For much of the first period, the police had difficulty getting close to the Navy Vet net.

"That's the first shot on net for the Woodstock Police Service and OPP," announcer Brad Janssen said at the 11:08 mark of the first

period.

Near the end of the frame, the Navy Vets were even given a penalty for "too many goals."

The entertaining game became much more even after the police managed their mid-game recruitment of a couple of Navy Vets. While not as hard-hitting as most junior hockey games, there were some nifty scoring plays that swayed the appreciative crowd.

The Hawkins Family Memorial Fund is being used to support three bursaries that pay tribute to the Laurie, her husband Richard and their children. One bursary will be awarded annually to a student at St. Mary's High School, where Cassandra was a student. A second bursary has been established for a Grade 8 student at St. Michael's public school, where Jordan was a student. The final bursary will be presented to a student at Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute.

The fund will also be used to provide financial assistance to Oxford children who might be struggling to afford registration fees or equipment for local sports.

"We're just hoping people have fun," Murphy said, "and we want to keep the Hawkins family memory alive."



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The charity game between the Woodstock Navy Vets and members of the Woodstock Police Service and Oxford OPP raised about \$3,000 for the Hawkins Family Memorial Fund.