

TORNADO TIMES

Jim Gregory Friendship Tournament 2009

by Michael Liotta

Many people have been asked how Grandravine came to be the host of the 2009 SHI tournament, now known as the Jim Gregory Friendship Tournament between the end of last season and now. Well, here is the full story.

It began back in March of this year. Jake's House, a Toronto based charity that provides support for children with autism, was holding a tournament involving GTHL house league teams. This tournament was called the Jim Gregory Friendship Tournament. Grandravine was invited to play a game there as sort of a demonstration of what we were all about. At this game I met NHL vice president Jim Gregory and Jake's House founder David Bodanis. Both were quite impressed with our game and our players. David and I talked and he suggested it might make more sense if their tournament involved SHI teams. After a few more phone calls we came up with the idea to have the Jim Gregory Friendship Tournament become the new name of the SHI annual tournament. For Jake's House it meant they would have a tournament that supported developmentally challenged individuals directly, as well as supporting it's own Legends Program. For SHI it meant a new source of funding for their tournament as well as the support of Mr. Gregory.



This idea was presented to SHI at it's annual meeting in April where it received a positive response from other members of SHI. At

this same meeting it also became apparent that plans for 2009 tournament had fallen through. The St. Catherine's representative suggested they might be able to step in and host the 09 tournament and asked for 2 weeks to put a plan together. After the 2 weeks they came back with the unfortunate news that they would not be able to pull it off in time. Joe Rizzuto and I then discussed the possibility of Grandravine hosting it. After all we had raised the idea of Grandravine hosting a future tournament with our members at an earlier meeting where we had received a very positive response. With no

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- Christmas Bowling Party
Dec 13, 2008
- Family Skate
Dec. 27, 2008
- Valentines Dinner/
Dance Fundraiser
Feb. 21, 2009
- Casino Rama
Feb. 7, 2009
Mar. 28, 2009
- SHI Tournament
Apr. 16 - 18, 2009

SHI and Jake's House

by Mary Seguin

This year, SHI is partnering with Jake's House for the 2009 Tournament hosted by Grandravine and will be known as the Jim Gregory Friendship Tournament. For those of you who don't know, Jim Gregory is the Senior Vice President of the NHL.

Jake's House provides assistance and support for families and children living with autism. They organize events to help bring people together and will be providing funding for the SHI tournament. Some of their celebrities that "play for Jake's House" include Jim Gregory, Bobby Orr, Wayne Gretzky, Don Cherry, Rick Nash, Mark Messier, Ron Francis, Al MacInnis, Wendell Clark, Scott Stevens, and Kevin Lowe. Their legends program matches mentors to children with autism. Jake's House helps communities understand, helps families connect and network, and offer assistance and respite. For more information on Jake's House, go to their website www.jakeshouse.ca



Grandravine Tornadoes Hockey Changes Lives

by Liz Grazer

Happy Holidays and welcome back for another fun-filled season of Grandravine Tornadoes hockey. This is our family's 2nd year of Tornadoes hockey and we are so excited to be back. I will never forget the way I felt the first time I saw our 12 year old boy, Tye, bedecked in all his teal and purple glory, suited up & ready to get on the ice as a real hockey player, for the first time. It brought tears to my eyes then and it still brings tears to my eyes now because that was the day his biggest dream was made a reality. Something that many "average" kids take for granted meant so very much to Tye and to our family as a whole. And in talking to other parents of players who play in the "heart league" I have found we are not alone. Grandravine is a place where special needs people of all ages - *and* their families, can be free to be themselves, to participate, to be accepted and most of all, to belong. Without judgment, without fear.

Tye was hesitant to join the team that first day back in October '07. In fact, we almost didn't come because he felt strongly he would hate it, despite having begged us for years to put him on a hockey team. Like many other Grandravine players, Tye is an avid, sports obsessed Leafs fan who idolizes the players of the NHL and wants to grow up to be just like them. But, he couldn't skate, and was worried that he'd be left out, rejected, made fun of or

left behind. He thought ball hockey was the answer. I convinced him to at least come check it out and promised that if he hated it we never had to go back. Within 5 minutes of arriving we were pointed in the direction of Joe Rizzuto, club president and father to Mark Rizzutto - one of over 75 other players who make Grandravine their home every Saturday. Within 1 minute of meeting Joe (always ready with a joke or ten), Tye was sold. He was welcomed warmly and assured that his level of ability didn't matter here; that he would learn, and that he'd make friends and most of all that he'd have fun.

Before we knew it, Tye was fitted for equipment, suited up and on the ice. We'd come as observers, but left as members. Thanks to the all-important fundraisers held throughout the year that make equipment, ice time, games and social events possible at *greatly* reduced rates compared to your "regular" hockey team signup fees, Tye became a hockey player that day and never looked back. Today, it's as if life before Grandravine never existed for him. From October to April, Grandravine is Tye's life and as result, ours. He spends every day looking for-



ward to the next practice, the next game and the next chance he gets to hang out with people who have become his best friends. And I have to admit, we do too.

For the first time, Tye has REAL friends who look forward to seeing him every week, who really "get" him and who accept him as he is. He has learned to skate and is improving slowly but surely with each practice. Our take away? SHI hockey clubs are a fun, friendly environment and a great social event each week for parents and players alike. There's something to be said for integration but there's something to be said for being yourself, amongst people who are just like you, too. Everyone deserves a chance to really belong. At Grandravine, we do.

Welcome!

A big welcome to all our 17 new players and 5 coaches. We hope you have a wonderful time with Grandravine playing hockey and meeting new friends.

New Players: Dominic Calomini, Andy Chen, Matthew Cortese, Diana Davidson, Nicholas Guzman, Liev Hurtig, Daniel Juravsky, Andrew Lee, Daniel Rigato, Shawn Salas, David Saymaz, Bowie Siu, Sam Sniezek, Michael Stanco, Gabriel Vomisescu, Joshua Yang, Calvin Zhu.

Coaches: Charles Buick, Chris Hall, Marty Juravsky, Carlo Muraca, Christopher Jefferson

Well Wishes

Wishing a speedy recovery to Mehul Selarka from his surgery, and all of our well wishes to Heff from his Grandravine family.

New Logo

Special Hockey International has a new logo which is now on our website.

SHI Video

SHI and Jake's House have made an amazing video for the 2009 Tournament that comes from and goes right to the heart that has always made "special hockey" special. Our own Jared Krybus speaks for all our kids with grace and pride. Watch it on our website.

<http://www.grandravinetornadoes.org>



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND CONGRATULATIONS

September:

Players - Andy Chen, John Elbe, Biagino Iamascia, Kurtis Ruan, Sam Sniezek, Eric Seguin, Calvin Zhu.

Coaches - Charles Buick, Rino Cacciotti, Peter Flick, Rene Hiller, Bill Moxey, Margaret Wiley

October:

Players - Nathan Cacciotti, Francis Cheng, Diana Davidson, Mio Espina, Nicholas Guzman, Harry Hill, Andrew Leah, Steven Merrick, Jonathan Parisien, Steven Tari

November:

Players - Piero Fratangeli, David Gosling, Daniel Juravsky, Mike Mogford, Daniel Rigato,
Coaches - Mike Iamascia,

December:

Players - Gary Cabral, Jared Krybus, Ryan Reid, Isaac Rous-

seau,

Coaches - Marty Juravsky, Anthony Liotta

January:

Players - David Saymaz

Coaches - Mark Furlong

Announcements

Annual Grandravine Christmas Bowling Party

Saturday, December 13th, 2008 at Rexdale Bowl-erama from 2:30-5:00pm. This is a time when players, coaches, volunteers, and families come together for food, fun, and a fill up of holiday spirit!

Family Skate

Saturday, December 27th, 2008 from 11:00 - 12:00. All family, friends, caregivers are welcome.

Valentines Dinner/Dance Fundraiser

Saturday, February 21st, 2009 at La Contessa Banquet Hall 6:00pm

This year, Lisa Rizzuto is again hard at work organizing the best party of the year! Come and help support our athletes. Bring your friends. Bring your families. Tickets will be on sale December 21st. The cost will remain at \$50 for players, \$75 for guests, and \$50 for children under 12. Lisa is looking for any donations for prizes and raffles.

Casino Rama Fundraisers

(Please note date changes)

Saturday, February 7th

Saturday, March 28th

On behalf of our Grandravine players, thank you so much to everyone who signed up and braved the snow for our first Casino Rama Trip on Dec. 6th. Although we all came home a little lighter or heavier in change, it was well worth it. All money raised goes directly to Grandravine, so please consider coming with us. The sign-up sheet for the next trip will be up Dec. 13. Please see Mary Seguin.

SHI Tournament Hosted by Grandravine

April 16 - 18, 2009

Chesswood Arenas

Please remember to sign up.

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other host in place there was now a very imminent need. At an SHI meeting in May, with no other options left, Joe and I said Grandravine would host the 09 tournament upon approval by our members. At our Annual General Meeting in June, Grandravine members voted to host the tournament. Then the work began in earnest.

In July Jake's House arranged for a video to be made promoting SHI and the tournament. This video will be played at Junior A games in Ontario. It will also be used on websites and presentations to promote special hockey and to help with fundraising efforts.

By the time our season began we put in place the arena and banquet facilities and had just about completed arrangements with six area hotels to host our guests. Chesswood Arenas will be home to over 100 games in 3 days and the International Centre will host over 2000 people at the banquet. Now, with the help of many volunteers we are in the process of making all the final arrangements. We were simply not going to disappoint so many athletes by not having a tournament in 2009.

For anyone not familiar with this event, it will go something like this. We are expecting about 50 teams, 600 participants and over 2500 spectators from across North America and England. The event kicks off with the opening ceremonies at Chesswood Arenas on April 16, 2009, that has in the past included such noteworthy VIPs as Don Cherry, Mark Daley, George Smitherman, Hazel McCallion. Over the next 3 days more than 100 games will be played in a non competitive format that has to experienced to be appreciated. Friday night will see another traditional event in the coaches' game between coaches representing the Canadian and US clubs. This all culminates in an intimate banquet for over 2000 people at the International Centre. Either as a spectator or as a participant, you won't want to miss it.



**Grandravine
Special Program**

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