

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

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### **Planning well underway for 2023 Ontario Winter Games in Renfrew County**

Planning is well underway as Renfrew County prepares to welcome young athletes from across the province for the Ontario Winter Games in February 2023.

Originally scheduled for 2022, the games were postponed due to concerns surrounding COVID-19. Now, with seven months to go until the County of Renfrew hosts the games, the Games Organizing Committee has been working hard behind the scenes to get everything set and ensure these are the best games ever!

Hosting these games across eight different communities at 18 different venues in the County is a huge undertaking. The committee anticipates it will need between 800 and 1,000 volunteers to ensure that the Games run smoothly and efficiently. The committee will be posting specific roles and opportunities on the website as early as September so people can register to volunteer, notes Games Manager Cindy Burwell.

“This is a great way to get involved and support the community, while also gaining work experience, meeting new people and having fun,” adds Burwell.

The Ontario Winter Games, which are supported financially in part by the Province of Ontario, will attract approximately 2,200 athletes, competing in 23 sports, in addition to 1,000 coaches, officials and managers who will support the Games. The Games are scheduled to take place from Feb. 2-5 and Feb. 9-12, 2023.

One of the objectives of the games is to motivate and inspire youth to get involved in sports. While few youth from Renfrew County will participate in the Games, the hope is that seeing young athletes competing on this level will spark excitement in local youth.

“Our goal in hosting the Games, in addition to being an economic booster for the County, is to provide an opportunity for local youth to see what is possible, to inspire them, and encourage young people to get involved in sport,” says Burwell.

At the June session of Renfrew County Council, Games Organizing Committee Chair Councillor Peter Emon introduced the legacy project of the Games, which will include creating a fund to make sport accessible to everyone in Renfrew County. The goals

are to increase participation in sport and foster a lifelong love of sport; develop more accessible infrastructure and sport programs and ultimately create a healthier, happier society.

"Our community is waiting with a lot of pent-up excitement for the 2023 Ontario Winter Games and we are going to deliver the best games ever," Chair Emon says. "We need your help to ensure our community shines. Sign up as a volunteer, become a sponsor or donate to the legacy project. Help us showcase our community to the rest of Ontario."

The Games Organizing Committee is working with the Ontario Government, local municipalities and other partners to ensure that every athlete has the transportation, accommodation, food, competition, camaraderie and fun that multi-sport events of this magnitude have to offer. While the province provides a significant portion of the funding to finance these Games, the Committee needs additional support from sponsors, donors and the community.

"The impact of COVID-19 has been felt in all areas, and these Games are no exception. With inflation, supply chain issues, staffing issues, and the direct cost of postponing, we will need to raise a significant amount of money to cover our costs while also leaving behind a significant legacy in the community," adds Burwell. "We are counting on local businesses and individuals to join us in making these the best games ever!"

The Ontario Winter Games began in 1970 and are held every two years. They have become the province's largest multi-sport winter event. The Games are designed to be a platform for the development of young amateur athletes and provide an opportunity to gain competitive experience. For some, the Ontario Winter Games is the pathway to national and international competition.

Anyone interested in volunteering can email [info@renfrewcounty2023.ca](mailto:info@renfrewcounty2023.ca). For more information about the Games, including sponsorship opportunities, visit [renfrewcounty2023.ca](http://renfrewcounty2023.ca).

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