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Family Day WinterFest South Huron schedule posted online

Visit familydaywinterfest.ca for Family Day holiday events for February 20, 2017

Family Day has favourites like Lions' Family Breakfast and fireworks along with new events; Canadian Olympic athlete Melanie McCann to provide interactive fencing at 2017 event

The 2017 Family Day WinterFest South Huron combines the return of popular events along with exciting new additions such as interactive fencing, instructed by Canadian Olympic athlete Melanie McCann. Also new in 2017 is fun with martial arts for youths ages 4 to 12 with Sensei Peter Becker.

McCann was born in Clinton and Mount Carmel is her home town. She made her Olympic debut at London 2012 and her 11th place finish there was the best-ever Olympic result by a modern pentathlete representing Canada. She finished 16th place at the Rio 2016 Olympics and was in third place heading into the combined event.

WinterFest chairperson George Finch said the schedule of events for the Holiday Monday in February is growing and changing but currently planned events are now posted online at familydaywinterfest.ca. The wide range of Family Day events is only possible because of local businesses and service clubs and other generous donors along with volunteers, according to Finch. He encourages people to support the businesses and organizations listed on the event website. For the current schedule of events including registration details, and to find out which events are free and which events have prices, visit familydaywinterfest.ca.

Events are to take place in Exeter and some surrounding South Huron communities.

At Stephen Arena in Huron Park, Healthy Kids Community Challenge Huron is offering skating and other fun and active events for children and youths, including healthy snacks. (More than 80 people attended this event in Huron Park this past year. Activities have included a free skate, healthy snacks, face painting, and scavenger hunt. Healthy Kids Community Challenge is also promoting *Water does Wonders* to encourage families and communities to offer water as the number one source for hydration. Sugar-sweetened substances can cause health implications from too much sugar in the diets of children and adults, according to Healthy Kids, so "let's drink more water and less sugary stuff.")

About five miles east of Exeter, popular horse-drawn wagon rides are returning, sponsored by Miller's Country Store.

Exeter-based events include the Exeter Lions Club Family Breakfast; face painting courtesy of Exeter Lioness Club; children's activities courtesy of South Huron Optimist Club; a demonstration from Dance Techniques; free family snowshoeing, courtesy of Friends of the South Huron Trail and Ausable Bayfield Conservation; instructional darts and free billiards, sponsored by Royal Canadian Legion Branch 167; Pickle Ball; courtesy of Exeter Senior 55+ Picklers; Indoor Archery, courtesy of South Huron Archery Club; a big-screen G-rated movie at Exeter Elementary School, sponsored by Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Huron and Starlite Drive-in; Mount MacNaughton snow hill courtesy of Municipality of South Huron Roads Department; and more. There is free family skating at South Huron Recreation Centre, thanks to local sponsors (courtesy of Exeter Lions Club; Municipality of South Huron; Jim Scott Enterprises; C.E. Reid and Sons; JMR Electric; and Masonic Lebanon Forest Lodge, No. 133); and weather permitting there will be free outdoor skating at MacNaughton Park Pavilion courtesy of South Huron Fire Department Exeter Station Fire Fighters' Association. Weather-permitting, there will also be the popular fireworks, courtesy of South Huron Fire Department Exeter Station Fire Fighters' Association and thanks to fireworks sponsors: Glavin Coating and Refinishing; Exeter Lions Club; Hay Communications; and Northlander Industries.

The Exeter Lions Club held its first Family Day Breakfast in 2010. That breakfast has become a popular annual tradition since then. Other community groups joined forces with the Lions Club starting in 2011 to add other family-friendly activities for the holiday Family Monday. The success of the one-day winter festival has continued to "snowball" ever since. Thousands of people have come to the South Huron area since 2010 for Family Day WinterFest South Huron. This popular winter festival takes place on Holiday Monday, February 20, 2017.

Some events are at South Huron Recreation Centre and some events are at MacNaughton Park as well as other Exeter and area locations. Most events are free. Visit familydaywinterfest.ca to find out about new events as they are added, to find out times and locations, for registration details, and to find out which events are free and which ones require admission. Keep posted as well to the growing list of generous sponsors. Some events depend on snow but there are indoor events as well and "snow or no snow, WinterFest is a go!" Even if you have not tried some of the activities before, organizers say "don't be shy ... come out and try something new."

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