



**HOCKEY EDUCATION
REACHING OUT SOCIETY**
LE HOCKEY ET L'ÉDUCATION
SONT DE RÉELS OUTILS SOCIAUX

184-1857 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 1M4
www.heroshockey.com

SuperHEROS Adapted Hockey Winnipeg Launch

We are very excited to be launching our newest SuperHEROS Adapted Hockey program in Winnipeg in November of 2022. With programs already in place in Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Surrey, and new programs also starting this season in Saskatoon and Red Deer / Blackfalds, this will bring to the 9 the total number of teams that will wear the SuperHEROS jersey this season

What is HEROS?

The Hockey Education Reaching Out Society (HEROS) is a federally registered charity that began operating in 2000. Since then, more than 17,000 players have taken part in HEROS programming across Canada. For the first 18 years of our existence, our sole focus was providing access to hockey based mentorship programming in neighbourhoods where families encounter significant financial and social barriers to sport across Canada. There are currently 21 HEROS programs spread across the country from Vancouver Island to Quebec, as well as a program in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In early 2018, we discovered that there was an absence of programming available for young people living with disabilities in Western Canada, and felt we could possibly address that gap. We quickly convened advisory groups, sought funding, and in time for the 2018/19 hockey season, SuperHEROS launched as a pilot program in Calgary.

What is SuperHEROS?

SuperHEROS is an adapted hockey program expressly designed for aspiring players ages 7-17, living with physical and/or cognitive challenges that otherwise would prevent them from playing hockey or even other team sports. We call it adapted hockey because we tailor our approach to meet the group needs as well as the individual needs of the players in our program.

We truly believe that disability need not be a barrier for a child who wants to play the game. While many of our current players live with cognitive challenges such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, and Fragile X, we are also able to provide access to hockey for players living with physical barriers such as Cerebral Palsy, auto immune deficiencies, gross and fine motor delays, and the like. We have also have a number of players who live with very unique diagnoses and combinations of diagnoses that have made it difficult for families to find safe and accepting team sport environments.

We utilize a high coach to player ratio (2 players to 1 volunteer) that allows our players to receive a high level of individual support. Our ice times do not look like organized hockey programming might - we use everything from stuffed animals and light weight pucks (for players with strength or sensory challenges) to specialized equipment like stand up wheel chairs and Kaye Trainers for players who require physical assistance to participate.

Engage.

Engagez.

Educate.

Instruisez.

Inspire.

Inspirez.



**HOCKEY EDUCATION
REACHING OUT SOCIETY**
LE HOCKEY ET L'ÉDUCATION
SONT DE RÉELS OUTILS SOCIAUX

184-1857 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 1M4
www.heroshockey.com

Our ice times are less structured than a typical community hockey team might take part in. A combination of games and larger group drills and individual opportunities to develop skills and interests allows our players to take part with their teammates while also helping to develop their sense of self-determination and self advocacy. You may see a group of players working on their passing at one end of the ice in a fairly typical looking hockey drill, while elsewhere a player is skating along the boards using visual cues (like stickers) on the boards as they work on their confidence, balance and leg strength. At the same time, a coach is helping a player in a stand up wheelchair move around the ice and visit their teammates and experience being on the ice.

What it is not is a hockey development program. Part of the evolution of the experience is for our SuperHEROS to play friendly games against hockey teams in the community. However, we are not looking to create a competitive environment, or enter teams into an existing league. We believe that the disability community has long been excluded from the hockey community, seen only in roles behind the glass, because they have been expected to adapt to meet the traditional hockey structure. We want to adapt the game to meet the players where they are at so that they can proudly call themselves hockey players. We want to provide a long-term safe community for our players where they can develop a sense of confidence in their identity as hockey players and as people. ***Our success measurements are not on ice but in how it impacts the player, and their family's life off the ice***

Who will coach my SuperHERO?

All of our programs are volunteer run. As we developed our program, our advisory groups encouraged us to find a balance between people with experience in the disability field and those without. Simply put, we look to find the very best mix of great people bringing a range of professional and life experiences who at the end of the day share our values of inclusion, acceptance, compassion, and belief in the power of sport. All of our volunteers undergo Criminal Record Checks, and throughout partnership with Canadian Tire Jumpstart complete training that includes Coaching All Abilities.

Our coaching approach centres around the idea that you get to know the player first, and worry about the hockey player second. Rather than a lot of theoretical knowledge about Down Syndrome, we ask our volunteers to learn what living with Down Syndrome means for each of our players and their families (because it will look different in each circumstance).

A core group of volunteers who attend every week (consistency and predictability are so key for our players as we have learned) are augmented by a rotating group of players from University hockey teams as well as other teams from who assist each week providing direct interaction with other hockey players that share the love of the game with our SuperHEROS

SuperHEROS Winnipeg

- SuperHEROS Winnipeg will take place every Saturday morning throughout the hockey season. It is not a drop-in program, rather we are looking for players and families who will commit to being part of our team and community
- Players registered at the start of the season will be provided with their first set of gear in an equipment fitting night prior to the start of our season. Families who register after that date will be responsible for providing their own gear, as well as when players outgrow their gear.

Engage.

Educate.

Inspire.

Engagez.

Instruisez.

Inspirez.



**HOCKEY EDUCATION
REACHING OUT SOCIETY**
LE HOCKEY ET L'ÉDUCATION
SONT DE RÉELS OUTILS SOCIAUX

184-1857 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 1M4
www.heroshockey.com

- This is intended to be their team for as long as they wish to play. Players must be between the ages of 7 & 17 to register for the first time, but can remain as long as they wish (including into adulthood)
- SuperHEROS is free of charge to take part in. We know that disabilities touch every type of family, in every financial situation. We also know that raising children with disabilities has many hidden or unpredictable costs. To that end, we work diligently to find funding to allow us to charge no fees. In Saskatchewan, this funding comes from The Platinum Jets, S.S Invitational Golf Tournament, St James U13 Canucks (Good Deeds Cup) and Canadian Tire Jumpstart. We do ask families to consider donating to HEROS if they can, to help us grow our number of programs and the number of kids we can impact, but it is not mandatory for your child to take part

How do I get involved?

Volunteer - if you would like to volunteer you can apply to volunteer directly on our website or by following the link here <https://heroshockey.com/volunteer/>. If you require more information please connect with HEROS.volunteer@gmail.com

Volunteers must be 18 or older and willing to complete a volunteer application, a Criminal Record Check, and 8 hours of online training

Our SuperHEROS players are the most successful when they are surrounded by a core group of consistent and predictable faces. As a result, we are looking for people who can attend a minimum of 80% of the weekly sessions

The type of person you are is more important than how experienced you are as a hockey coach. If you are kind, compassionate, patient and love working as part of a team (other volunteers as well as players families) and believe in the power of sport to impact young people in a meaningful way then SuperHEROS might a great fit for you.

SuperHEROS Player - players must be between the ages of 7 & 17 to register, and the maximum group size is 24 players. They must live with a cognitive and/or physical challenge that prevents them from taking part in organized hockey otherwise. Program is open to players from Winnipeg and the surrounding areas. To get more information or to register your player, please contact our Executive Director Kevin Hodgson at kevin@heroshockey.com



Engage.

Engagez.

Educate.

Instruisez.

Inspire.

Inspirez.



**HOCKEY EDUCATION
REACHING OUT SOCIETY**
LE HOCKEY ET L'ÉDUCATION
SONT DE RÉELS OUTILS SOCIAUX

184-1857 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 1M4
www.heroshockey.com

Engage.
Engagez.

Educate.
Instruisez.

Inspire.
Inspirez.