



CPRA ACPL

REACHING EACH AND EVERY ONE

Success Story

A group of parasport curlers with the chair of development programs.

Cornwall Curling Club fosters a love of curling for every one

THE CORNWALL CURLING CLUB IS A special place in the small PEI town.

It's where many newcomers to Canada carefully step out onto the ice, and feel the smooth cold surface under their feet for the very first time. For people with disabilities, it's a space that offers unlimited possibilities – where nothing stands in their way of playing one of the country's most beloved sports.



CORNWALL CURLING CLUB,
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



The director of development helping a stroke survivor curler throw his stone with a mobility aid.



Two people sweeping a stone at a clinic for newcomers

But while the club welcomes these participants through its Learn to Curl and ParaSport programs, they require funding to ensure their success and longevity. That's why in 2023, the organization was thrilled to receive financial support from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's Reaching Each and Every One: A Community Sport Intervention program. This program, which was funded by Sport Canada's Community Sport for All Initiative, seeks to remove barriers and increase sport participation rates for equity deserving groups across Canada.

Landon Warder, a program administrator and instructor for the Cornwall Curling Club, says the funding supported both the ParaSport and Learn to Curl programs – allowing for additional participants to play, access better equipment, and enjoy more ice time.

“Without this funding, our programming would have been a lot more limited. It would have been tougher to keep people around. Now when they show up, our participants are fully taken care of and have all the equipment they need to play. This breaks down a lot of barriers,” says Warder. “This funding was crucial to making sure that these people have a good time, and feel comfortable enough that they want to come back for another round of curling.”

For the ParaSport program, the funding allowed the club to purchase specific gear that helps people with disabilities play the game – allowing them to overcome physical barriers to the sport. For example, Warder says people who live with physical disabilities might have a hard time throwing the heavy curling stones, and need assistive devices to help them play the game. Thanks to this funding, he says the club was able to purchase special sticks that can help participants with disabilities hold the stones easier.

“You're throwing 40-pound pieces of granite on the ice. It's not something that is easy for everyone to do,” Warder says.

He adds that newcomers also face barriers to curling – including language, and lack of exposure to ice sports. Warder says many of them have just recently arrived in

Canada from warmer climates, and might have never stepped foot on ice before. In addition, he says many of them might not see themselves reflected in the sport, which might deter them from playing.

But he says the funding helped newcomers overcome these barriers by giving them basic equipment and instruction to help them learn to curl. The grant also allowed the club to purchase more grippers for newcomers, which is a piece of equipment curlers wear on their feet to keep them from sliding on the ice.

“We have a decent selection of grippers, but they're meant for people who look like me,” Warder says. “There are a lot of people who are a lot smaller than me, and so we've been able to purchase 20 new small and extra small grippers that are going to make the sport more accessible for people in our community.”

The funding also allowed the club to host larger curling events among the parasport and newcomer communities, and invited members of the Immigrant and Refugee Services Association (IRSA) and Parasport PEI to these events. Warder says these gatherings helped newcomers and people with disabilities connect with each other, and made them feel more comfortable playing the sport.

“It's been particularly gratifying to see newcomers going from being kind of skittish and uncomfortable, to being around people they are comfortable with, and having a great time.”

Without the funding, Warder says it would have been difficult to engage with IRSA and Parasport PEI, and equip participants with the proper gear they need to curl. These positive changes regularly brought people back to the curling club, he says, which made a major difference in their lives.

“Curling just lit up their days,” he says. “It's so great to see everyone enjoying the activity itself, and the community aspect as well.” 🍁