

## Community comes together to support St. George skating rink

Rink so popular, volunteers plan to build a second one next winter with already donated funds

By Matthew Bingley, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 08, 2017 10:00 AM AT Last Updated: Jan 08, 2017 10:00 AM AT

When Troy Morton remembers winters in St. George as a child, he thinks of the town's outdoor skating rink. Those memories propelled Morton on a quest to build a new rink, but he didn't do it alone.

Last fall Morton went before town council and asked for help with the project. It obliged by providing him \$1,000 and a spot to build the rink. Morton took the money and went to the local Home Hardware to see how far he could make it stretch.

"I asked Scott Boyd if he could give us a deal on the lumber and materials," said Morton. "He sharpened his pencil for us and gave us a phenomenal deal."

Cooke Aquaculture then got involved, providing the rink liner and other building supplies. Morton said any time there was a need for something, Cooke was ready to help. Since then, the company has also pitched in an old skate sharpener.

## Lots of elbow grease

Morton said the community provided the rest, including some much needed elbow grease. It all lead to the rink's opening, just in time for the town's Santa Claus parade last month.

"A handful of us stayed day and night to get enough water in here that we could have skaters," Morton said.

Since then, the volunteers haven't let up. Out almost every day and night with Morton, is Scott Cook. The pair worked on the ice until about 3 a.m. Saturday and were back to flood the ice a few hours later. While Morton will describe Cook as his "right-hand-man," Cook said every time he turns around, someone is there wanting to help.

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"They sort of come and go," he said. "When you need an extra hand, they just seem to appear out of nowhere."

Walter Beach has been volunteering since before Christmas, when he drove up one night to pitch in. Ask him why he wanted to get involved and the answer is simple: "Well I like to see the kids, you know, enjoying themselves."

## Name suits volunteer help

So many people have volunteered, that Morton said the name needed to reflect that community spirit. That's why it's named the St. George Community Built Skating Rink.

"We just started building on the idea and some funding started coming in from the community," he said. "Before you know it, we had a full canteen, a new site, and a brand new beautiful rink."

The canteen is run by a local not-for-profit group Backpack Blessings and Beyond, a weekend food program for local school children. The money raised from the hot chocolate and treats they sell to skaters, will go back into the program.

## Second rink in making

Every few minutes while flooding the ice Saturday morning, Morton's phone chimed with a notification. In just a few hours, people pledged \$3,000 for the rink, which Morton said will be put to good use next year.

The demand for hockey is so great that we have to build a second rink," he said. "And that's just what we're going to do."

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Lisa Giesbrecht's son is among dozens of kids who have been playing hockey at the rink everyday. She said she's impressed by how much those using the ice have been learning about civic engagement.

"They help clear off the ice and they make sure they respect the young kids here," she said. "It's great to see them really being a part of our community as well and feeling like they're valued here."

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