



Graham Paine/Metroland

Rep hockey teammates Thomas Johnstone (with puck) and Luke Gallinger play a game of shinny on Luke's backyard rink.

## DO-IT-YOURSELF ICE RINKS POPPING UP AROUND TOWN

BY NELIA RAPOSO

With local arenas closed for the second winter due to pandemic restrictions, some families have created an ice rink of their own.

Kathryn Gallinger's son Luke plays rep hockey in Georgetown. So when the local arena shut down, his parents sprang into action — building a five by nine-metre (16 by 30 feet) ice rink.

"With the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to ensure there was an opportunity for the kids to stay active and continue playing hockey. With the current shut down of the OMHA (Ontario Minor Hockey Association), having a backyard rink allows him to lace up and get on the ice in his own backyard," said Kathryn.

She and her husband Tom purchased a rink kit for about \$2,000 and were able to follow the step-by-step instructions to complete the project.

The family plans on using the materials again.

"If someone had the time and confidence to build their own, they could purchase the wood and tarp at a more affordable

price from the local hardware store," noted Kathryn. "The price for us to maintain the rink is really just the additional cost to the water bill. We use the hose and give it a little flood almost nightly for about 10 minutes."

This is the second winter Terri Furtado-Cichoszewski and her husband Marcin built an ice rink in their south Georgetown backyard, using leftover materials from a renovation.

"My husband had been thinking about building a rink for a while, and we figured it would be a fun experience for our two sons, (who are nine and three years old)," she said. "We finally decided to give it a go last year with just a small rink to start. With COVID lockdowns, and not being able to go to the arena for a public skate, kids at home doing online learning and us working from home, we figured we would get a lot of use out of it. We were able to go outside during lunch breaks for a quick skate and to get some fresh air. The timing was perfect."

The rink is 24 by 20 feet (6.1 by 7.32 meters). The

main component, and the biggest expense was the liner they purchased. The rest of the materials are a few two-by-eights and plywood.

"Once the rink is built and it freezes over, there's not a whole lot of maintenance. It just comes down to shovelling the snow and an occasional resurfacing to smooth out the ice," said Terri.

She offers this tip to anyone building a rink for the first time: "Make sure you have a fairly flat area to work with, and a strong frame to start.

"Don't underestimate the weight of the water. If the frame is not properly reinforced, the water could push out the boards and bulge out. A good liner is also key. The thicker, the better."

Both families agree that an outdoor ice rink is a safe way to connect with extended family during this latest surge in COVID-19 cases.

For those unable to visit a private outdoor rink, Halton Hills has three public outdoor skating options. One is at Georgetown Fairgrounds and there are two in Acton; at Prospect Park and the other at Acton Arena near the skate park.

Outdoor rinks are lit at night. Light timers have been set to operate from 5 to 11 p.m. daily.

## Winter Pet Care Tips



### FEED WELL.

Give your pet plenty of food and water, because keeping warm outdoors takes energy.



### CHECK PAWS.

Wipe with a damp towel to remove salt, and check for ice accumulation and damage.



### PROVIDE ADEQUATE SHELTER.

If your pet must be outside much of the day, they need a dry, draft-free shelter.



### DISCOURAGE HITCHHIKERS.

Bang on the hood or honk the horn to ward off cats or wildlife attracted to a warm engine.



### PREVENT POISONING.

Ethylene glycol antifreeze is deadly, but has a sweet taste. Wipe up spills to protect animals and children.



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