

Sports person of year wants newcomers to try hockey

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of the initiation program as well as other training and development initiatives.

"Virtually every weekend from September to April Joe can be found at the arena co-ordinating the efforts of convenors, coaches and game officials to ensure that games and practices involving 40 teams go on as scheduled. It is difficult to imagine that the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association would have enjoyed the success it has without the outstanding contributions of people like Joe Palma," Easter said.

June Doner, the softball association's president, says Palma's dedication and experience gained through the years in being involved with their organization has enabled him to be a valuable person to have in an executive position.

"Joe is devoted to promoting sports in Stouffville," she said. "His unique and varied experiences in local sports, whether it be hockey or softball, give him a perspective on situations and aids him in coming to resolutions for problems.

"Joe is always willing to help out when and where he is needed and does so with enthusiasm. He strives to give every child a positive, memorable experience when playing sports. Stouffville, and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association is fortunate to have such a dedicated volunteer."

There's a social aspect.

"The most rewarding things over the

years in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association has been the friendships I've made with players, their families and other association members and being able to increase the focus and resources allocated to the house league program," he said.

"There's a lot of passionate, grass-roots level enthusiasm and support for hockey in Whitchurch-Stouffville and being able to be a part of that and influence it, to the extent I can, has been fun."

He strives to give every child a positive, memorable experience when playing sports.

Hinting he will step down from his post with the softball association after the current season and minor hockey when the next annual general meeting takes place next year, the soon-to-be retired IT architect still has some objectives to fulfill.

"I'd like to see the house league (hockey) program continue to increase the investment in skills development in the IP, novice, atom and peewee divisions," he said. "In addition, I'd like to see our house league program running at, or near, full capacity; we have an influx of new residents into town and I'd like to see their children involved in the game and the parents involved in volunteering.

"But it's fun in getting to know the kids and seeing them enjoying the game."



SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Sports person of the year Joe Palma is a big fan of the friendships made through sport. He's responsible for the 600-player house league in Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey.



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