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By Hannelore Volpe

Matthew Nighswander has brought home some major hardware from the Special Olympics in South Korea: a silver medal to add to his collection.

It was the first international competition for the seasoned athlete from Stouffville.

Over 3,000 athletes from 111 countries came to compete at the mountain resort city of PyeongChang from Jan. 29 to Feb. 5.

The Special Olympians spent months in training. And as a run-up to the games in South Korea, Matthew's Team Canada East floor hockey team competed in Lake Placid, N.Y. late last year, as did Team Canada West from Saskatchewan.

The trip to South Korea, however, was a real eye-opener. As soon as Matthew and his team mates were seated, the pilot of their flight to Vancouver made it known: the Special Olympians were on board! In Vancouver, they were met by cheering crowds, including firefighters, who waved signs and banners.

But the sight of the bright red and white Canadian flags that greeted them upon landing in South Korea is one they won't soon forget.

"A group of young Koreans with welcoming signs waited for more than an hour for the Canadian athletes to get through customs and cheer them as they arrived," said Matthew's dad,

Nighswander Brings
Floor hockey team tr

James.

For a moment or two, Matthew was almost speechless.

"When Matt can go speechless," commented his sister Julie Anne, "it is pretty good!"

James and his wife Joanne accompanied their son on the trip.

Excitement ran high among the athletes when they found out the President of South Korea was at the games' opening ceremonies.

When it came time to get down to business, Matthew's team was on a roll, winning consistently until they got to the gold medal game they had set their sights on.

But it was a bitter-sweet moment by the time the dust had settled. Despite a courageous effort, the Canadians were bested by the team from Bangladesh 2-0.

Although Matthew's goal was to bring home a gold medal, just making it to the gold medal game "was totally exciting," he said, adding he "...couldn't ask for a better game."

A spirit of camaraderie developed at the games, with families and supporters "cheering on athletes from every country, not just their own," Joanne noted.

Through it all, the Nighswanders soaked up South Korean life.

For Matthew, "the neatest thing about South Korea was seeing how they live there."

He got to try on traditional Korean wedding attire, do Psy's

**Museum Exhibit Explores
Canadian Stories**

Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum is hosting the Defining Moments Exhibit: Discovering our Canadian Stories.

This travelling exhibit, created by TakingITGlobal and supported by Canadian Heritage, is a national digital media arts and citizenship project aimed at engaging youth across Canada, encouraging them to explore, express and showcase their diverse

perspectives on Canadian identity. It features 26 winning pieces, representing eight provinces/territories across Canada.

Visitors to the exhibit, which continues until March 31, are invited to participate in an on-site art activity that expresses their Canadian identity. For more information call 1-888-290-0337 or visit www.townofws.ca/museum.



Free Press editor Kate Gilderdale (right) presents a copy of *The First Years: Stouffville Free Press* to Julia Dupuis and James Floros of Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum.

Ten Things From Page 6

8. I will not stop advocating for Brody. I believe in his potential, and I will not allow one bit of it to be wasted. All children have potential, regardless of a diagnosis. It is our job as parents and educators to help them reach it fully.

9. For all of the educators out there (ECE's, teachers, EA's, principals), I will always ask more of you. But I will never ask more of you

so that I can do less. Brody's success depends heavily on *everyone* going the extra mile.

10. Autism is not something to be afraid of, or ashamed of. It is simply a different way of looking at the world. I think Temple Grandin's mother said it best, "Different... not less." That is exactly how I wish for the world to see Brody.

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