

City's R.P. Lumber Center to Debut Program for Children with Disabilities

by Cathy A. Hensley
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EDWARDSVILLE – The R.P. Lumber Center is launching a program designed to help children with disabilities experience the joy of an ice rink. “Shine on Ice” will debut in April at the City’s ice rink and recreation center as a series of classes created specifically for people with disabilities ages 17 and younger.

“We just want to give everyone the opportunity to be on the ice,” said Phil Zamora, the R.P. Lumber Center superintendent. “It’s so rewarding, and some people just don’t have that chance.”

The program has been made possible by a \$15,000 grant from the Dana Brown Charitable Trust, U.S. Bank Trustee. The grant was secured by the Edwardsville Community Foundation on behalf of the City’s R.P. Lumber Center. It was a collaborative effort involving the Foundation; the City’s Parks and Recreation Department; Edwardsville Economic and Community Development Coordinator James Arnold; and former Alderman Tom Butts, an avid backer of the plan to build the R.P. Lumber Center as a facility serving the entire community.

“ECF is proud to have been selected as a grant recipient by the Dana Brown Charitable Trust, U.S. Bank, Trustee, for the Shine on Ice project. Receiving this grant provides the opportunity for children of all abilities and backgrounds to learn how to ice skate,” said Pamela Farrar, the executive director of the Edwardsville Community Foundation. “We are grateful to the Dana Brown Charitable Trust, U.S. Bank Trustee, for choosing to fund this project.”

The grant will allow the R.P. Lumber Center to offer the first Shine on Ice eight-week session for free, and to purchase a variety of “learn to play” accessories that will be available for participants to use for as long as they continue with the program. The activities offered during each class will depend on the interest and abilities of the participants, Zamora said. It could range from skating to playing hockey to simply sitting on the ice. Each session is expected to include eight one-hour classes.

The first session will begin on Saturday, April 1, and continue on consecutive Saturdays. Zamora, who suggested bringing Shine on Ice to the R.P. Lumber Center, has already heard from people who are interested in the program and hopes to see it grow and continue long beyond the initial sessions.

Registration is not yet open for the first Shine on Ice session, but those with questions or interest in the program can contact Zamora at the R.P. Lumber Center at 618-307-1707.