

CELEBRATING A GRAND RE-BIRTH (How 'Ray Friel' Got Born, again)

Grand Opening celebrations can be a lot of fun. Newness, growth, anticipation, expectation, novelty...an air of excitement and fulfillment...DMC Ottawa can take these qualities and create an event or series of activities to showcase the launching of most any new enterprise.

Creating a celebration for the renovation, expansion, re-branding and re-opening of an established public recreation complex though, doing it with flair and high-profile enthusiasm, is a little more challenging.

DMC Ottawa was hired to do just that by SERCO, one of the world's most successful facility management companies, and by the City of Ottawa.

DMC Ottawa conceptualized, developed, promoted and implemented a two-week program that celebrated a \$13 million expansion of the City of Ottawa's Ray Friel Recreational Complex.

The program greatly expanded awareness of the facility among the community at-large. Public stakeholders and local decision-makers became more involved, before, during and of course, after the two-week period.

Ribbon-cutting and VIP Reception – August 3, 2005

The ceremony was performed at center ice on one of two new NHL-sized surfaces and involved the players, in full uniform, of the local Girls Hockey Association in a variety of roles: from escorting the dignitaries, to acting as welcoming ambassadors for the general public. A VIP Reception followed in a newly-opened restaurant overlooking the ice surfaces. Facility tours were offered to everyone.

Public Open House – August 7-13, 2005

The Centre opened its doors for two weeks, free to the community, allowing visitors to tour the expansion and existing facility and, very importantly, to participate in any and all sports activities and recreational programs of interest and appeal offered by the re-born complex.

Two themed weekends highlighted the Open House: the first started with a pancake breakfast followed by an outdoor stage program featuring childrens' entertainment, aerobics, kick-boxing, dance, karate, yoga and other demonstrations of Ray Friel Recreation Complex programs.

"Celebrate Sport" was the theme of the second weekend, drawing-in the community to meet local sports celebrities including Shauna Burke, second woman to climb Mount Everest. A BBQ lunch was served.

A Magical Mystery Tour (staff appreciation evening – August 15)

We delivered at Camp Fortune Ski Resort in the Gatineau Hills, an appreciation evening for 250 Ray Friel Complex staff ranging from 16 to 50+. They were bused to their unknown destination, picking up "hitchhikers" along the way who broke into robust song and delightful close-up magic tricks and illusions en-route.

A chair lift ride took guests to the top of the mountain for the spectacular view followed by a deluxe BBQ, specialty coffees and a huge bonfire where marshmallows were roasted under the stars to the background tunes of a live folk band.