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The Clarkston News



Phil Custodio
write the author

Skaters present Polar Express

December 10, 2008 - More than 50 local skaters will tell the story of the "Polar Express," through music interpretation on ice.

"We working hard to prepare," said Hollie Campagna, director of figure skating. 'It's a lot of fun - lighthearted entertainment, good family fun. It's a great way to kick off the holiday."

Lakeland Skating Club members, 7-17 years old, will perform solos, duets, trios and group numbers choreographed to music from the film as part of their new Holiday Festival on Ice, Monday, Dec. 15, at Lakeland Arena,

The Clarkston News

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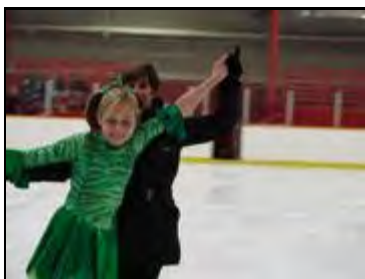
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"My vision for the holiday festival is to create another avenue for our skaters to shine like the stars that they are," said Campagna, Clarkston High School graduate. "With the expansion of the holiday exhibition, I am not only able to reach out to our new skaters to provide more performance opportunities, but also to the community to invite them to share in our program during the holiday season."



Hollie Campagna, director of figure skating, helps Berkley Bretschneider with her routine. Photos by Phil Custodio ([click for larger version](#))

The festival begins with a pre-show exhibition by Team du Coeur synchronized skating teams at 4:30 p.m., followed by the Polar Express themed show from 5-7 p.m. Admission is free, and refreshments are available.

"I like the routines we learn," said Seneca Moore of Clarkston, 13, who will skate to "I love candy." "I like flip jumps, they're challenging but easy."

The Clarkston Junior High School student has been skating for eight years.

"I love the sport, all the elements, jumping and spinning," said Karisa Yu, 12, skater for nine years, performing as a chef.

Lexi Denio, 17, of Clarkston, will perform a solo as the "Spirit of Christmas."

"It's always been fun and challenging, said Denio, student at Our Lady of the Lakes with 11 years of skating. "There's always something new to learn.

A senior-level competitor, she is working on double axel and triple Salchows elements.

"There's a lot of work to do, but I'm getting closer," she said. "My goal is to land a triple and do well in competition."

Berkley Bretschneider, 10, is performing in her first show, with Team du Coeur - Beginner 1 team.

"I skated once and liked it so much," said Bretschneider, a student at Clarkston Elementary School.

"I like everything about it," agreed Rachel Horton, 10, student at

Andersonville Elementary.

Other Clarkston-area skaters are Alissa Chrisekos, 12, Lexa Prokopetz, 11, and Madison Dryden, 6.

Clarkston High School graduate Stephanie Wotton, coach for the past two years, has 16 years of skating experience.



Seneca Moore helps Karisa Yu with her skates, as Lexi Denio watches. (*click for larger version*)

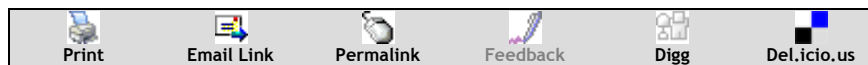
"Hollie was my coach," Wotton said. "It's been very rewarding, seeing the smiles on their faces. We have a lot of younger members. The show provides more opportunity for younger students to solo."

In addition to the public performance, a school field trip day will be on Dec. 16, with one-hour Polar Express performances at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

The club offers skating classes for ages 3 to adult in eight-week sessions. For more information, call Lakeland Arena at 248-666-1911 or check www.lakelandskatingclub.org.

For more information on the synchronized skating teams of Team du Coeur, visit www.teamducoeur.org.

Phil is editor for The Clarkston News. He is a veteran of the first Iraq war, having served in the U.S. Army.



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