New skateboard park opens at Valley Gardens Community Club

photo by Wanda McConnell

John Carson (left) and a big crowd of local skateboarders are excited about the new skateboard park at Valley Gardens Community Club.

By Wanda McConnell
Herald Editor

They're doing heelflips and kickflips, nosegrinds, boardslides and ollies at Valley Gardens Community Centre this summer.

"They" are young skateboarders, some of whom are just learning the fascinating terminology for skateboarding tricks.

Safe and supervised

John Carson is the volunteer youth director at Valley Gardens. The father of two young sons himself, he could see the need for a safe and supervised place for skateboarders to enjoy their hobby.

He also knew it would be a shame for the club to sit idle, so he put the two together. The result is a skateboard park at the club, located at 218 Antrim Rd.

With a $7,000-grant from the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres Youth at Risk Program, Carson was able to contract Expressteel to custom build the railings, pyramids, wedges, jumps and fun boxes the skateboarders use.

He would also like the skateboard park, enclosed in one of the club's hockey rinks, to have a half-pipe or quarter-pipe. However, he needs donations of wood, money and labour to help make that a reality.

Big crowd

The park opened July 3 and on the first day, 62 kids registered.

Carson is excited that the park is up and running. "I've seen a lot of kids on the streets with their skateboards. I've almost hit a few. I just want to get them off the street and put them where they're safe and where there are facilities."

The club's washrooms are available for the skateboarders.

The skateboard park is open Monday to Friday from noon to 8 p.m. It is supervised by two young adults who are being paid with the profits realized from pre-teen dances held at Valley Gardens.

Skateboarders from six to 18 years of age are allowed to attend and must wear helmets. Their parents must sign a waiver to allow them to use the skateboard park. Fees are $3 daily, or $10 weekly. Seasonal passes are $25.

On weekends, Carson says the club hopes to rent the skateboard park out for private functions like birthday parties.

The supervisors at the park can teach beginners how to skate, adds Carson.

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