

It Takes a Village to Raise a Hockey Player

When a child leaves the rink with a smile after a fun game on the ice, they may not think about the many people who contribute to their success. From the organization of the teams and equipment to the rink staff and supporters, there is a small army of people that creates the environment that makes the game they love possible.

Today, we celebrate the many links in the chain that enable our kids to have a blast and enjoy the [benefits of Canada's favourite winter pastime](#) (in no particular order).

Coaches

These individuals brave cold conditions behind the bench and on the ice during practices. They focus on the development of every player to ensure they all learn and grow as people, not just as athletes. Without them, we would not be able to develop skills and play other teams.

Parents

These heroes get kids to the rinks for tryouts, practices and games. They provide the gear and the moral support. They sit in the stands and cheer on players so goals, saves, assists and other milestones (even acts of kindness) are celebrated.

Rink staff

When you walk into the rink, it's clean and welcoming. The dressing room is ready and waiting for you to bond with your team. The ice is primed for skates and the Zamboni is ready for half time. Afterward, you can enjoy a snack or warm beverage thanks to the people keeping the concession stands stocked for hungry players and their families.

Referees

We all need someone to call the shots and to make sure that any less-than-diplomat behaviour is kept in check. They drop the puck during faceoffs and call your goals. And they make sure everyone is safe by enforcing the rules.

Trainers

If your team has one of these gems, you will appreciate how they help you become a better athlete. They also make sure you're safe by preventing injuries. They teach players how to have better body awareness and how far they can push themselves without going too far.

Sponsors

They may not be at the rink with you, but they are there in spirit. Local sponsors are a big part of our hockey community and it's with their support we're able to have such fantastic seasons year after year. Each time you step on the ice or put your jersey on, say a little 'thank you' for their support. ([Here's how to become one!](#)).

Organizers

The board of directors, the operation staff and the tournament organizers all deserve our respect for the thankless hours they spend setting up the framework of the league. If they didn't work well in advance of the season, we would all be at home with no games to watch or play.

Timekeepers and other support staff

They keep games on track and record your goals and assists. You sit next to them while in the penalty box and appreciate when they unleash you back onto the ice. They make the game flow smoothly and get none of the glory.

Teammates

And, of course, you have to thank the people who play alongside you. Your peers make the game fun and set you up for success by feeding you the puck at just the right time. It takes all sorts of skills for a team to gel and every player is vital to everything – and everyone – coming together.

Thank you to all the people who make our league run so well. All of you are appreciated for the talents and time you give to the Whitby Wildcats and the [Whitby Minor Hockey Association](#).