

79 PER CENT OF FAMILIES SURVEYED WITH CHILDREN WHO PLAY HOCKEY MAKE SACRIFICES SO THEIR CHILD CAN PARTICIPATE

Hyundai Hockey Helpers works with financially challenged families to get their kids in the game through a partnership with Hyundai Dealers, KidSport Canada, Montreal Canadiens defenceman P.K. Subban.

MARKHAM, ON, July 16, 2013 /CNW/ - Hockey can play a vital role in a child's development, yet the soaring league and equipment costs are keeping many Canadian youth off the ice. In fact, the financial strain put on families is cited as the number one deterrent by hockey parents in a new survey conducted for Hyundai Auto Canada Corp.

The survey also found that nearly two-thirds (65%) of Canadian parents surveyed who have children that play hockey pay \$1,000 or more each year for each child to play organized youth hockey, citing high league fees (39%), equipment (23%), and out-of-town travel (28%) as the game's highest individual cost elements.

Hyundai Auto Canada decided to do something about the escalating cost by launching **Hyundai Hockey Helpers** in 2012 with a partnership with KidSport Canada, a not-for-profit organization that provides financial assistance to help deserving families pay for registration fees and equipment. Last year, the program provided grants to 1,879 kids so they could participate in the 2012/2013 season.

"As someone fortunate enough to grow up playing hockey, I know how important it can be in a building a child's confidence and values. Yet, the financial burden is forcing many parents to deny their children this opportunity, so we decided to create Hyundai Hockey Helpers," says Steve Kelleher, President and CEO of Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. "Now in its second year, this program is giving thousands of children the chance to be part of a game that could very well change their lives."

For 2013, Hyundai Hockey Helpers is again teaming up with one of Canada's most accomplished hockey families, the Subbans, led by father Karl, Montreal Canadien and Norris Trophy winning defenceman P.K. Subban, and his brothers Malcolm, a Boston Bruins draft pick, and Jordan, a Vancouver Canucks draft pick currently playing with the Belleville Bulls.

The financial burden of three kids playing hockey was so great for Karl Subban that he worked full-time as a teacher, as well as working other jobs to earn additional money. Free winter nights were spent with his boys at the public rink at Toronto's Nathan Philips Square honing their basic hockey skills.

"Hyundai Hockey Helpers didn't exist when I was raising my sons, so we had to make personal sacrifices and lean on our community for support because we believed organized sports would help them grow and develop," said Karl Subban, a retired middle school principal. "It was never about getting them to the professional leagues for us. It was about enabling them to learn the

social skills and positive personality traits that are cultivated in an organized sport like hockey. As part of my job, I saw first-hand many kids from families that could not afford to put them in hockey, and it broke my heart. Working with Hyundai Hockey Helpers gives me a chance to make a real difference in the lives of thousands of deserving kids."

Unfortunately for the country's favourite sport, Karl's family story is not unique. Hyundai Auto Canada commissioned a survey of 1,006 hockey parents. Ninety-five per cent agree that enrolling their kids in the sport requires a significant financial contribution. Indeed, 79 per cent say the family has to make sacrifices, with 53 per cent citing fewer vacations, 44 per cent attending fewer social events or family gatherings and 42 per cent saying the family has to give up participation in other activities such as different sports or music lessons.

In its inaugural year, **Hyundai Hockey Helpers** helped the families of more than 1,800 kids remove financial barriers to play hockey. In its second year, the program will help even more children, providing them with the opportunity to play Canada's national sport.

"At KidSport, we believe that no kid should be left on the sidelines and all should be given the opportunity to experience the positive benefits of organized sports," says Jamie Ferguson, Chair of KidSport. "We are very fortunate to have such passionate supporters as Hyundai and the Subbans to again help us achieve our shared objective of creating opportunities for under-resourced kids."

The program administration and the financial grants for the first 1,000 recipients of Hyundai Hockey Helpers is the result of contributions by all of the 210 Hyundai dealers across Canada, as well as Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. Furthermore, 100 per cent of every additional dollar donated by the public toward the program goes directly to KidSport to help one more kid get in the game. October also marks Hyundai Hockey Helpers Month in Canada where participating Hyundai dealers across the country actively conduct fundraising programs to help more kids in their region get in the game.

P.K. Subban, the 2013 Norris Trophy winner, will play a key role in bringing attention to the cause and inspiring Canadians to donate to the program. "I cannot even imagine what my life would be like if I didn't grow up playing hockey," he says. "Not every kid in youth hockey is going to make it to the professional level, but I can guarantee that each and every one will become better equipped to deal with life's many opportunities and challenges. This is truly an investment in our youth."

To learn more about Hyundai Hockey Helpers and how you can make a difference or apply for a grant, visit HyundaiHockey.ca.

About The Study

An online survey was conducted between June 4 and June 10, 2013, with sample of 1,006 randomly selected Canadian parents with children that play hockey and who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. Discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

About Hyundai

Hyundai Auto Canada, established in 1983 and headquartered in Markham, Ontario, is a subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company of South Korea. Hyundai vehicles are distributed throughout Canada by Hyundai Auto Canada and are sold and serviced through more than 210 dealerships nationwide.

About KidSport

KidSport was established in 1993 because of an identified need by leaders in the sport community. They witnessed too many children on the sidelines because of financial barriers. Since that time, KidSport is going strong throughout Canada with over 170 local community volunteer chapters in 11 provinces and territories.

SOURCE: Hyundai Auto Canada Corp.

For further information:

For media interviews or additional information, please contact:

Nicole Brightling, Citizen Optimum

Office: (416) 934-8099, Mobile: (647) 680-8575

nicole.brightling@citizenrelations.com