

HYUNDAI HOCKEY HELPERS MONTH LAUNCHES TO HELP KIDS PLAY HOCKEY

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, Oct. 1, 2013 /CNW/ - The puck drops today for Hyundai Hockey Helpers Month, a nation-wide, grassroots campaign to help deserving kids play organized hockey, with fundraising activities at Hyundai dealerships and online at www.HyundaiHockey.ca. This year, thanks to its partnership with KidSport Canada, Hyundai Hockey Helpers now includes a public component where Canadians can set-up their own fundraising initiatives through the "Hyundai 1000 Puck Challenge".

Hyundai Hockey Helpers was launched in 2012 with KidSport, a not-for-profit organization that provides financial assistance to help deserving families pay for registration fees and equipment. Last year, Hyundai Hockey Helpers provided grants to 1,879 kids so they could participate in the 2012/2013 season. This year, October 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. It will also be the first year where the opportunity to fundraise will be opened to the public.

Hyundai Hockey Helpers Ambassador and Montreal Canadiens Defenceman P.K. Subban will issue a challenge through a new TV and online commercial (viewable in English and French on YouTube), asking Canadians to take the "Hyundai 1000 Puck Challenge". Hosted at www.HyundaiHockey.ca, the Challenge encourages Canadians to set-up their own fundraising websites, collect donations to help deserving kids play hockey, and access a 1000 puck shooting exercise designed by Subban.

"As someone fortunate enough to grow up playing hockey, I know how important it can be in building a child's confidence and values. Yet, the financial burden is forcing many parents to deny their children this opportunity. Hyundai Hockey Helpers is here to help," says Steve Kelleher, President and CEO of Hyundai Auto Canada. "We learned last year there is a definite need for this type of program and, frankly, it surprised us how big of a need there was. For the second year, we wanted to expand it and give thousands more children the chance to be part of a game that could very well change their lives. We think there's something powerful about asking Canadians to help deserving kids play hockey."

In a 2013 survey commissioned by Hyundai Auto Canada of 1006 Canadian parents who have children that play hockey, 95 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.

The survey also found that nearly two-thirds (65%) of the surveyed parents 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. A key partner in the initiative is KidSport, a nation-wide not-for-profit organization, with responsibilities that include evaluating applications and distributing grants to deserving kids.

"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 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 are 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.

Joining P.K. Subban as program ambassadors are father Karl, as well as his brothers Malcolm, a Boston Bruins draft pick, and Jordan, a Vancouver Canucks draft pick.

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."

P.K. Subban, the 2013 Norris Trophy winner, said: "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. More information about Hyundai and its vehicles can be found at www.HyundaiCanada.com.

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.

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For further information:

For interviews or additional information, please contact:

Chad Heard, Public Relations Manager, Hyundai Auto Canada Corp.

Office: (905) 948-6712, Mobile: (416) 559-9640, Email: cheard@hyundaicanada.com

Patrick Danielson, Public Relations Specialist, Hyundai Auto Canada Corp.

Office: (905) 948-6876, Mobile: (416) 518-5852, Email: pdanielson@hyundaicanada.com