

Tournament highlights volunteerism



HONOUR: Gerry Bryan, president of the NATO Vets, presents a NATO flag to Cadet Flight Sargent Lindsay Houghtling as Ellis Rickwood, 9, (left) and Kolby Amici, 9, proudly look on at the Preston International Hockey Tournament.

WALTER GOWING, SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

It was a great three-day Preston International Hockey Tournament that was highlighted by youth development and volunteerism in Cambridge.

Add to that honouring Canadian Armed Forces, and you have a fantastic feeling if you played hockey in Cambridge over the weekend.

Nearly 2,000 young hockey players, ages 8-10, from all over Ontario and the United States came to skate on our ice and enjoy a great time due to the hard work of hundreds of volunteers.

One of the great moments that the young players loved followed one of the All-Star games at the Preston Memorial Auditorium.

Gerry Bryan, president of the NATO Veterans Organization, Cambridge Area Unit 5, presented the NATO flag to Air Cadet Squadron 822, of the Cadet Youth Development Centre at Waterloo Region International Airport.

On bended knee, Cadet Flight Sergeant Lindsay Houghtling received the flag with nine-year-old hockey players Ellis Rickwood of the

Brantford 99ers and Kolby Amici of the Buffalo Regals taking part.

Throughout the ceremony, the cadet band of bagpipes and drums with a precision colour party provided music; including The Maple Leaf Forever, the NATO vets anthem.

NATO veterans, RCAF Lieutenant Colonel Ron Gowing of Cambridge, Peter Kanis, Cambridge, and Ron McNulty, Brantford, participated in the ceremony.

For two decades, more than 100 cadets and their parents have volunteered each year during the tournament. Several former cadets return each year as volunteers, including some who've served in the Afghanistan war.

Another important moment took place when the volunteers gathered to honour the late Cathy Koehler, who died last May 21 in her 54th year.

Born in Preston, Cathy had volunteered since 1989

in the food services section of the tournament at the Preston Memorial Auditorium.

"Cathy was truly a dedicated volunteer in hospitality," said Deb Woodley, a co-worker.

Senior tournament official Norm Wilson presented the Koehler family with a plaque in memory of Cathy's service. Another plaque with Cathy's picture will be

mounted in the kitchen at the auditorium.

"The kids have lots of fun on the ice," said tournament chairman John McCash, "but it is all due to the wonderful volunteers that make the whole thing possible."

The tournament financially supports the Youth Development Centre, the girls' Fury hockey team of Cambridge and the Kids Can Play organization that helps fund sports and cultural activities for children who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford such activities.

