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Honeywood Arena makes finals for 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Mulmur residents rallied together to show their love of hockey, and now their local arena has been announced as a finalist in the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition.

Honeywood Arena was announced as one of four finalists in the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition on Saturday (March 15), with the hope of winning $250,000 for arena upgrades and the chance to host an NHL pre-season game.

?This is a huge opportunity for us if we win, but we've also already won as a community by creating a positive impact for our local residents and for our community. We've rallied and have all come together,? said Jeanette McFarlane, a member of the Honeywood Fundraising Committee and lead organizer of the local Hockeyville fundraising team.

The 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition started on Jan. 1 with the ?Nomination and Rally? phase, which officially wrapped up on March 2.

Community members submitted nomination stories, sharing why the Honeywood Arena is important to them and the community, and how winning the competition would help enhance the space for future generations.

?It's where families head to after school and on weekends to make memories and to be part of the community. For kids, it's part of working towards whatever their on-ice dreams may be,? said McFarlane about the arena.

The North Dufferin Community Centre (NDCC), commonly known as the Honeywood Arena, has been a long-standing fixture in the community for more than a century. The first rink was built in 1912 by Thomas Crawford but collapsed in 1921 under the weight of heavy snow. In 1948, a total of $91,000 was raised to build a new arena, which opened the following year.

The Honeywood Arena experienced another tragedy, on Jan. 24, 1965, when it burned to the ground. The arena was rebuilt and opened by Christmas 1965 following fundraising efforts from the community.

The Honeywood Arena has seen notable hockey players pass through their doors, including Bert Wilson, who became Honeywood's first NHL player, and Aaron Downey, who won the Stanley Cup with the Detroit Red Wings in 2008.

In a January press release announcing their participation in the annual event, the Township of Mulmur highlighted how the Kraft Hockeyville Competition could bring ?much-needed? renovations to the Honeywood Arena.

?It's an aging arena in great need of repair and there's so many essential upgrades that we need to do,? said McFarlane.

While McFarlane said there's a long list of upgrades needed for the 60-year-old arena, the Kraft Hockeyville Competition prize money would be specifically allocated to projects that address equality.

Some of these upgrades include providing girls with change rooms, fixing existing washrooms and installing a proper water fountain for kids to fill up their water bottles.

The Top 3 Runner-Ups of the Kraft Hockeyville Competition will receive $25,000 for arena upgrades and $10,000 for equipment.

?We've won in so many ways, but this gets us closer to getting the job done and raising funds for the arena,? said McFarlane.

Voting will open on April 4 at 9 a.m. EST and close on April 5 at 5 p.m. EST. Votes can be submitted at www.krafthockeyville.ca.

?Do it for the future generations to be able to have a special place in the community where they can continue with and live out their on-ice dreams,? McFarlane concluded.

The winner of the 2025 Kraft Hockeyville Competition will be announced on April 5.