



For immediate release

## **Markham Awarded Trillium Grant Sport Council to Create First-of-its-Kind Club Development Program**

**MARKHAM, ON ~ August 17, 2006** ~ The Markham Sport Council has received a \$121,500 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for community sport organization development.

The two-year grant will enable the MSC to help Markham sport clubs develop volunteer recruitment and retention, fair play and respect, and organizational effectiveness.

"This is another honour for Markham. We continue to be recognized for our strong, long-term commitment to the provision of sport opportunities for Town residents from all cultural backgrounds, ability levels and areas of interest," said Mayor Don Cousens.

Using the Trillium funding, the Sports Council will work to create a first-of-its-kind club development program for all Markham sport organizations. This development will educate clubs in areas including volunteer recruitment, screening and retention; business management, including financial and governance; coach and officials training; fund raising, marketing and communications. Plans also include development of a website to promote sport clubs to the community and to act as a resource base for clubs, the provision of workshops and other education opportunities, and hiring of a development specialist to work directly with organizations to develop and implement the community sport-organization accreditation program.

"We want to recognize and promote top-quality Markham sport organizations, while helping them reach their goals for effectiveness, stability and program excellence", said Sport Council Chair Paul Jurbala. "We will be working in close consultation with our sport groups, as well as the Town of Markham and other interested parties, to help make Markham the best sport community in Canada."

The Markham Sport Council plans to begin the consultation process with a meeting for its member organizations in September.

Earlier this year, Markham received a Bell True Sport Award through the Markham Sports Council. The True Sport Foundation (TSF) is the national, charitable organization committed to ensuring that sport makes a positive contribution to Canadian society.

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## **Background from the Markham Sport Council Application**

Despite this importance, volunteer rates declined from 31% in 1997 to 27% in 2000 in Canada, and 65% of sport organizations report difficulty in finding good volunteers. In Markham, sport organizations representatives have repeatedly told the Markham Sport Council that they need more help on issues including volunteer recruitment and retention, understanding and working on improved facility access, and volunteer coach and official development.

In business, the best-known development and accreditation model is ISO (e.g. ISO 9002), which is based on a comprehensive audit and standards process. Some Canadian sports have strong club systems, and have created club development programs- notably, curling and gymnastics. We can learn from these. In England, Sport England has created the Clubmark program, which works in partnership with England's National Sport Organizations to develop club standards and provide recognition to clubs which meet those standards. Clubmark provides a number of resources and examples useful for a Canadian program. Yet despite these examples there is no Canadian example of a unified sport club development program that we are aware of, working at a community level to develop organizations from all sports.

The Markham Sports Council proposes to create a first-of-its-kind club development program for all Markham sport organizations. A "curriculum" will be developed based on standards set, in part, with the input of the local sport community. Organizations which complete the audit and training process will be accredited, using a "gold, silver, bronze" or similar model. The program will draw on elements of the many resources available to the sport and volunteer community, such as NCCP, High Five, Sport First Aid, MARS, and Safe Steps - bring them to the service of the local community within the framework of the club development and accreditation project. This will both meet the needs of Markham sport organizations and the Town, and allow accredited clubs to be promoted more effectively to parents and participants as safe, ethical, skilled, and progressive organizations.