



International Children's Winter Games  
January 26 – 31, 2011

Report to City Council

## "CONNECTING LIVES"

The 5<sup>th</sup> International Children's Winter Games were held January 26-31, 2011 in Kelowna, British Columbia. These were the first International Children's Winter Games to be held outside of Europe. They were a tremendous opportunity for Kelowna to showcase its region, venues and hospitality to an international audience.

The Games objective is to enable, develop and advance the meeting, understanding and friendship of athletes between the ages of 12 - 15 from different cities around the world and to promote the Olympic Ideal. The theme for the Kelowna Games was "Connecting Lives" which celebrated the ICG vision of promoting friendship and sharing.

The Games were well attended, organized, and a memorable event for all who participated.

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*"A little tired but full of inspiring positive feelings about your very successful Games I'm back at work again. I hope for you that you now could lay back and look back full of satisfaction, happiness and pride to the accomplished highlight! Many thanks again and best regards to all your people that helped and supported the Games!"*  
*Best regards, take care*

*Torsten Rasch, President ICG*

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*Dear friends,  
HVALA (thanks) for great hospitality, fantastic organization and GREAT GREAT GAMES!!!  
Me and Zlatko arrived home safely after midnight our time. During flight we checked all the photos you gave us and we went through all the games again. You did fantastic job - you 4 and all your colleagues and all volunteers and all parents and sponsors.  
Stay well*

*Igor Topole, Vice President ICG*

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## Community Benefits

The fifth International Children's Winter Games were an incredible sport and cultural event which were open to our entire community to participate in. The Games:

- Promoted Kelowna as an international tourism destination and showcased our great city on the international stage.
- Highlighted the Central Okanagan's world class winter sport venues to an international audience.
- Connected local companies with international contacts.
- Raised incredible community and civic pride through our athletic performances, volunteer spirit, and sport community to have successfully hosted such a prestigious international event.
- Created a unique cultural and sporting event open to the entire community.
- Promoted tourism through the local culture and heritage of the Westbank First Nations.
- Provided opportunities to meet and connect through our Games Village and Host Hotel; opening and closing ceremonies; seven sporting events; and the many entertainment and cultural events.
- Stimulated our economy by bringing visitors and athletes to our city at a quieter tourism time for the region.
- Engaged and connected local youth with youth from around the world.
- Established a legacy for our local athletes to compete internationally in all future winter and summer International Children's Games.
- As a host city, Kelowna becomes a member of the ICG General Assembly and has full voting privileges.
- Established a legacy of international friendship and cultural exchange.
- Encouraged a legacy of active living, involvement in sport and culture for youth between the ages of 12 – 15, their families and friends.
- Provided the opportunity for local sport clubs, coaches and officials to participate in and experience a diverse international event. Our sport venues and clubs were exceptional hosts to the Games.
- The media coverage for the Games was outstanding with radio, television, cable, and the local papers covering the Games before, during and post Games. Received coverage in the Globe and Mail. Our website was over loaded with traffic on day two and continues to have parents and families visit the site for results, pictures and information on the Games.
- DVD of the Games will be produced and sent to every city that participated.



## The Sports

The sports included in the fifth International Children's Winter Games held in Kelowna were: figure skating, snowboarding, alpine skiing, cross country skiing, speed skating, hockey and curling. These sports were held at our world class venues of Big White Ski Resort, Telemark Ski Hill, Kelowna Curling Rink, Memorial Arena, Rutland Arena, Prospera Place and at the Capital New Centre.

New to the International Children's Winter Games this year were hockey and short track speed skating. Eight boys and five girls' teams from both Europe and North America took to the ice in hockey while athletes from Asia, Europe and North America participated in speed skating. Both first time events were successfully run and well received.

A total of 75 medals were earned by 20 different cities.

## Basic Games Facts and Figures

- All events and sporting competitions were free for the competitors, their families and the public to attend
- 21 volunteers comprised the Organizing Committee for the Games
- 37 Cities participated - 18 International and 19 Canadian
- 13 Countries participated
- There were 472 Athletes (271 boys and 201 girls), 125 coaches and 52 VIPs for a total direct delegation count of 705
- It is estimated that over 15,000 people attended Games events
- 98 Kelowna homes billeted 175 athletes, coaches and head of delegation
- A total of 1355 athletes, coaches, VIP's and families attended the event
- There were 890 volunteers, 175 performers and 200 parents involved in the Games
- 77 sponsors for the Games provided direct and in-kind sponsorship
- Over 200 International cities were invited to the Games.
- The total number of people directly involved in the Games was over 2,700



## **Economic Impact of the Games**

The International Children's Winter Games was a unique sporting and cultural event held in Kelowna in 2011. The Games created a tri-fold economic impact on our community. These were direct (initial shock), indirect (suppliers) and induced (personal spending) expenditures in our local community. Over 95% of these expenditures were in Kelowna and the Central Okanagan region. While the final economic impact study has not been completed it is estimated that the Games will have a total economic impact of well over \$2 million dollars in our community and over 55 jobs created.

## **Games Finances**

The total overall operating cost for the Games was approximately \$735,000. Over 56% of the costs towards the Games were provided through in kind donations for a total of \$415,000. \$320,000 was provided through direct sponsorship. The Games had 8 gold sponsors, 7 silver sponsors, 19 bronze sponsors and 19 Games Spirit sponsors.

## **Games Organization and Structure**

It is the responsibility of the host city to organize, support and deliver the Games. Delegations coming to the Games are responsible for their own travel arrangements to and from the Games. The host city is responsible for arranging the visiting delegations' accommodations, transportation, food and sport competitions during the Games. A 21 member Organizing Committee provided the leadership to stage the Games. Many local sponsors assisted with transportation, sports, food and accommodations costs during the Games, including the Delta Grand Okanagan, the "Host Hotel" and a key gold sponsor.



Billeting was a unique approach taken at these Games regarding accommodations for the athletes, coaches and heads of delegations. The only exceptions were the hockey teams which were housed in dormitories. Billeting was one of the biggest success stories of the Games. Through billeting local families had a chance to get to know an athlete or coach from a different city on a one to one basis. It provided athletes with immediate friends and families that were there to cheer them on and take care of them in a strange country. The billeting program was deemed a success by both the visiting delegations and local community's perspective and would be recommended for future Games or events held in Kelowna.

Many families have reported they remain in contact with their billet guests through social media and email and they anticipate a lasting international connection through the Games.

## Other Games Benefits

While the statistics and economic impact of the Games was significant perhaps just as significant were the many other benefits the Games brought. For example:

- It is hard to measure the civic pride and sense of accomplishment that the 69 Kelowna athletes and 19 coaches experienced while competing at the Games.
- It is inspiration when you know a young secondary school student's life was improved when her design was selected to be on the medals for the Games and her character "Slyde" become the unofficial mascot for the Games.
- It was a cultural milestone for the region when the Central Okanagan's artistically talented youth took the stage for the Opening Ceremonies ...they stole the show!
- It was a privilege to showcase Westbank First Nations to the world and celebrate their cultural heritage.
- Kelowna's team of 69 athletes had a wonderful opportunity to compete internationally while at home. They were incredible sport ambassadors for the city. Our team also won 10 medals at our very first Games placing second with Gorje Slovenia and just behind Seoul Korea with 11 medals.
- It was a joy to see youth from around the world sharing experiences, playing Games, and meeting each other for the first time in the athletes lounge.
- The Games are a sporting experience that will help and motivate youth to develop the skills needed to compete in other elite sporting events and to participate in sport to live healthier and more active lives.

The fifth International Children's Winter Games was a successful event for the City of Kelowna. Given the benefits to the community, hosting more events like this in the future should be encouraged.



**Appendix A – Cities attending the Games (red are international cities)**

- 1 Abbotsford
- 2 Canmore, Alberta Canada
- 3 Celje Slovenia
- 4 Chesterfield, USA
- 5 Chetwynd, Canada
- 6 Cleveland, USA
- 7 Coquitlam, Canada
- 8 Daegu, South Korea\*
- 9 Darmstadt, Germany
- 10 Fort Simpson, NWT Canada
- 11 Gorje, Slovenia
- 12 Hamilton, Canada
- 13 Innsbruck, Austria
- 14 Kamloops, Canada
- 15 Kaunas City, Lithuania
- 16 Kelowna, Canada
- 17 Lake Country
- 18 Lanarkshire, Scotland\*
- 19 Lausanne, Switzerland
- 20 Maribor, Slovenia
- 21 Maroondah, Australia
- 22 Montreux, Switzerland
- 23 Nisichawaysihk Nation, Nelson House Canada\*
- 24 Patras, Greece
- 25 Penticton, Canada
- 26 Reykjavík, Iceland
- 27 Seoul, South Korea
- 28 Strathmore, Canada
- 29 Surrey
- 30 Vancouver, Canada
- 31 Vevey, Switzerland
- 32 Waterloo, Canada
- 33 West Kelowna, Canada
- 34 Westbank First Nation
- 35 Whitehorse
- 36 Windsor, Canada
- 37 Woollahra, Australia

\* Delegation only

## Appendix B: Other benefits and Testimonials

The fifth International Children's Winter Games were a tremendous success. Youth along with their coaches and families visited Kelowna for 6 days to experience the Games, the City of Kelowna and Canadian hospitality. Here are some examples of the value of these Games to Kelowna and reaction to the Games experience out-of-town delegations had while in Kelowna.

### Testimonials and Benefits

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"When I come back to Kelowna I am going to definitely stay at the Delta Grand Hotel.... what a great hotel" - Todd Roche, speed skating coach Fort Simpson.

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The Canmore speed skating team is returning to Kelowna in March 2011 for another speed skating competition.

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Parents of two hockey players from Darmstadt, Germany have contacted Kelowna to explore sending their sons to Kelowna for hockey schools.

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All of the Kelowna curlers were new to the sport of curling. Based on their experience they now plan to continue on in this sport.

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The head coach for the alpine team from Vevey Switzerland, Julien Chevally rated Big White as "world class" and said "On behalf of the ICG delegation from the Swiss Riviera (Vevey-Montreux), I would like to thank you a million of times for the wonderful Games you organized. Ours athletes, coaches and reps had really a gooooooood time during this days in your region. Thanks to your great organization, our athletes won 8 medals and the wil ed of that time forever. Hope to see you soon (let me know if you come once in Switzerland).

Kinds regards,

Julien  
Julien CHEVALLEY  
Délégué au sport

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Sample letters of thanks we received

### **Windsor Head of Delegation**

Good afternoon everyone,

On behalf of Mayor Eddie Francis, Windsor City Council, Councillor Drew Dilkens, Gordon Orr and the Windsor delegation, we extend our sincere thanks to the organizing committee and volunteers who showcased a magnificent 5<sup>th</sup> International Children's Winter Games in Kelowna, BC.

There is no doubt Windsor athletes enjoyed themselves during the sporting competition and also during the social events interacting with other athletes from around the world. The ICG Winter Games provided an opportunity for young athletes to compete in their chosen sport while learning and appreciating other cultures. Windsor athletes did all that and then some. This once in a lifetime experience will be cherished always. Now, we too, can brag about Canada's beautiful west coast and especially the Okanagan Valley with so many attractions and incredible outdoor venues.

To your team, thank you! We certainly enjoyed ourselves, learned a great deal for planning the 2013 Summer Games and provided insight to the dynamics of hosting a large event with so many components involved from hospitality – transportation – accommodations – food/beverage – tourist packages, etc. We appreciate the opportunity to live and learn and enjoy another region in Canada.

I hope everyone enjoys a bit of a vacation break...it was a fun filled week.

We look forward to meeting you again in the future, and wish you continued success with local athlete programs. These Games have been a tribute to the development of youth. Thank you again for a wonderful experience.

Kind regards,

Nora Romero  
City of Windsor

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### **Coquitlam Minor Hockey**

Steve and Heather:

Thanks again for everything you, your Committee members and Volunteers did for the teams! Totally awesome! The boys and parents have memories of a lifetime!

Attached are a couple pics for the paper or your files. Thanks again from Coquitlam.

Carl Severson  
C- 604.317.5527  
H- 604.941.5802

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## **Vevey Switzerland Parent**

Dear Kelowna 2011,

This is congratulate you for the great time that my daughter had playing the ICG. For sure, she will remember all her life long what she experienced in Kelowna : The discovery of beautiful country and people; Something 'magic' she keeps saying.

For us, her parents, we were very happy to follow the Games on the internet where a lot of information was published. It was perfectly reflecting the enthusiasm that was existing on site.

Thank you for all your efforts to prepare and conduct this outstanding Event. They were more than successful !

Best regards

Anne-Solène Brégou's parents  
Vevey, Switzerland

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## **Coquitlam Parent**

I would like to thank you all for putting together such a spectacular event that the children will remember for the rest of their lives. It was very well organized and the children had a wonderful, memorable time.

Thank you to everyone who put in all their hard work. You can definitely pat yourselves on the back for a wonderful job.

**Shannon Hawes**  
[slhawes@terryhawes.com](mailto:slhawes@terryhawes.com)

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## Australia

Hi Heather, (cc to Richard & Torsten),

Well, how does it feel to have a hugely successful International Children's Games done and dusted!

On behalf of all the Aussies, I'd like to say *huge thanks to you and your team*. Knowing how many times during the planning process that we needed your support and assistance, and multiplying that by the number of teams that were at the Games, I can only begin to imagine how busy you have been over the past 6 months. The great success of the Games can surely be attributed to the excellent management team and commitment of everyone involved.

I travelled down to Sydney on Wednesday to welcome home my Maroondah and Woollahra squads. It's always a huge buzz to be at the airport to see my groups arrive home (actually, I think it's one of the best parts of my job) and I can't tell you how excited they were to be able to start sharing all their amazing stories with their families and with me.

The experience was a wonderfully positive one for absolutely everybody involved from our two teams - squad members, teachers, parents and supporters. I have had many emails from parents to reiterate what a fantastic time their son / daughter had, and thanking me for presenting the opportunity to participate at an ICG to their school. As the ICG is hardly known here in Australia at all, it's always a huge challenge to get schools to sign up - so when I receive feedback like that it's enormously rewarding for me. Once a school or community has their first ICG experience I know the 'word' will spread further and more kids will be lucky enough to get involved in the future.

Thank you again Heather for your very professional, friendly and super efficient 'hands on' co-ordination of what's been a truly life changing experience for 27 very fortunate young Aussies. I've no doubt that this ICG experience will stand them in good stead for the future and the memories of their 'huge' time in Canada will last a lifetime.

I do hope our paths will cross again one day Heather. Do you still plan to continue your involvement with the ICG? Will you be attending Lanarkshire? I most definitely hope we can roll out the red carpet for you here in Lake Macquarie in 2014 .... YES? If so, dinner's on me!

*Congratulations once again* - and please pass on my very heartfelt thanks to your supporting team.

Best regards to you Heather,

Caroline O'Brien  
Director  
Australian Group Travel Company