



YNCU HOSTS MOTIVATE 2 SKATE 4 GIRLS TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND OPPORTUNITY IN SPORT

Free one-day skating program removes barriers and empowers young girls through sport

SAULT STE. MARIE, ON | FEBRUARY 11, 2026 - Your Neighbourhood Credit Union (YNCU) is hosting Motivate 2 Skate 4 Girls, a free, one-day skating program designed to help young girls build confidence on the ice in a safe, supportive environment. The event will take place on Friday, March 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the YNCU Soo Pee Wee Arena, ahead of International Women's Day on March 8.

Launched in 2024, Motivate 2 Skate 4 Girls is a dedicated initiative within YNCU's broader Motivate 2 Skate program, created in honour of Debbie Sims, a longtime YNCU employee who devoted nearly 40 years to the credit union system. Debbie was a passionate supporter of hockey, a champion for girls in sport, and a leader known for her kindness, compassion, and commitment to community.

"At YNCU, we're focused on supporting the people and families who strengthen our communities every day," says Lara Stilin, Chief Financial Officer of YNCU. "Motivate 2 Skate 4 Girls is about creating access and confidence early on, giving girls the chance to try sport in a welcoming space and see what's possible for themselves. It also reflects Debbie's lasting legacy, carrying forward her spirit and enthusiasm for girls' sports, particularly hockey."

The free program is open to young girls of all skill levels and focuses on learning basic skating skills while encouraging teamwork, resilience, and a love of sport. Experienced instructors and mentors will lead the session, and YNCU will provide skates and helmets for all participants, helping remove financial and equipment barriers.

"Programs like Motivate 2 Skate 4 Girls reflect YNCU's broader strategy to invest early, remove barriers, and strengthen communities from the ground up," adds Stilin. "When young people feel supported and included, it builds confidence that carries far beyond the rink and contributes to healthier, more resilient communities over time."

As part of the event, YNCU will also award the Debbie Sims Memorial Scholarship, established to support registration, equipment costs, or travel expenses. Eligible nominees must be registered with the Sault Female Hockey Association (SFHA) and demonstrate the values Debbie embodied, including respect, fair play, humility, gratitude, and generosity.

Nominations for the Debbie Sims Memorial Scholarship are open until February 13, 2026, and the scholarship will be presented during the Motivate 2 Skate 4 Girls event on March 6.

To learn more about Motivate 2 Skate, 4 Girls, visit www.yncu.com/about/Motivate2Skate.

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ABOUT YNCU

YNCU is a member-owned, B Corp Certified, local financial institution serving communities across Ontario. With 22 branches across 18 communities and a network of surcharge-free ATMs, members can access financial services close to home throughout the province. Serving more than 65,000 members and managing \$3.5 billion in assets under administration, YNCU is one of Ontario's largest credit unions. Together with its members, people, and community partners, YNCU is helping to build stronger communities.

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