

Girls Hockey Building On a Dream in Oregon

By Stephen Kerr, 10/04/19, 12:00PM MDT

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All-girls Rose City Hockey Club provides a place to play and develop in areas beyond hockey

When Rose King and Caroline Parks formed the all-girls [Rose City Hockey Club](#) in the fall of 2013, there were no girls teams in the state of Oregon. But they believed in the same vision that inspired the fictional character in “Field of Dreams” — If we build it, they will come.

The launch of the RCHC almost reads like a Hollywood script. Its growth has been steady almost from the beginning. King still remembers the night back in 2013 when the idea for an all-girls program was born. She, Parks and several other women had just finished playing a game in an adult league when they noticed a group of young girls running around the rink.

“They looked really interested, as if they wanted to be out there [playing],” King recalled. “We recognized quickly there were no options for them. Obviously, they could have played co-ed or gone into a learn-to-skate program with our various rinks. But there was really no place for them to be with their friends.”

The women initiated a pilot program of skating sessions and drew about 60 participants. In the years since, the club has grown to over 120 players and three travel teams at the 10U, 12U and 14U levels, along with a house program of up to 50. Partnerships with various local associations have allowed the program to expand to three rinks.

The club prides itself on more than developing competitive teams or individual hockey skills. Its mission is simple but powerful: To help every girl gain confidence and the leadership skills necessary to be successful on and off the ice.

Thanks to grants and donations, the program loans hockey gear to its players, and even offers scholarships to keep the game affordable for families. In the 2019-20 season, nearly \$1,400 in scholarships were awarded to qualified candidates.

During the summer, girls have the opportunity to take part in a camp to prepare for the upcoming travel season. This five-day camp offers dry land training, video reviews, and chalk talks from experts in leadership, nutrition, sports psychology and other areas of development. Girls get two hours of practice time each day on the ice, along with video reviews. Olympian Lindsey Fry helps in coaching the sessions.

According to camp director Courtney Carnes, who also coaches the 14U travel team, the objective is to cover all aspects of competitive development.



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"It's all things you would do on a travel team, or if you play college," explained Carnes, a top 10 scorer for Buffalo State who also played for the Buffalo Beauts in the NWHL's inaugural season. "It's not just getting on the ice and having fun and going through drills."

Besides Carnes, the program features about 30 other volunteer coaches who are all USA Hockey certified. Other volunteers include a board of directors, locker room monitors and team managers. Lisa Shim, whose daughters Siona and Langley both participate in the program, says her role as a locker room monitor allows her to see firsthand how clubs like RCHC allow girls to grow in ways they never imagined.

"It's interesting, the connections you can make and the community one can build through a single shared interest," Shim said. "[The girls] may have diverse backgrounds, but through that shared interest, it's such a wonderful place to build community."

The RCHC fully embraces [USA Hockey's American Development Model](#). King points out its merits go well beyond station-based practices.

"We are true believers [in the ADM]," she said. "Our coaches are huge advocates. Last year, we had 70 girls on the ice for one of our programs. There's no way you can keep girls at high puck touches, game-like scenarios the whole 60 minutes without using the ADM."

Beyond the numbers, the greatest success of a program's impact may lie in the unwavering commitment to its principles by families like Shim's. Both of her daughters have been with the club since they were 5. She believes RCHC has cracked the code in three areas: fostering a sense of both independence and self-reliance, a nurturing environment, and accelerating individual confidence.

“For me, those are fundamental skills my two girls can take into any other area of their lives, and they’re having a blast doing it,” she explained.

Story from [**Red Line Editorial, Inc.**](#)

Photo courtesy of *Rusty Aperture Photography*.