



Photo by James Wood

Belleville Youth Swim Team member Alexander Grant comes up for breath during the 200-metre 13-14 boys' butterfly swim at the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre. The BYST hosted the Eastern Ontario Swimming Association's latest regional meet this past weekend.

## Sports Centre location of swim meet

By James Wood

Shouts of encouragement, shrill whistles and the ringing of bells filled the air of the pool at the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre over the past weekend. Twenty-one teams from across Eastern Ontario came together in friendly competition, part of the Eastern Ontario Swimming Association's first big meet for 2014.

Swimmers ages nine to 25 participated in numerous events, competing to set the fastest time for strokes such as the butterfly, breaststroke and backstroke, along with longer events that were a test

of their endurance. The grueling 800 and 1,500-metre freestyles proved to be a significant challenge.

However, swimmers were never alone in the competition, with teammates and parents lining the walls of the pool. Their cheers and shouts of "Go!" would help keep the would-be champions forward throughout the race.

The Belleville Youth Swim Team was out in full force at the meet. Swimmers from the BYST took part in many of the time trials of the event, which was being hosted in their own home pool.

"I've been swimming since I was six

months old," said BYST swimmer John Butler, an 18-year-old student from Bayside Secondary School. "It gives me something to be part of a team of, and it's something cool that not a lot of kids in my school can say they're able to do."

This was the first championship meet hosted by the BYST in their new location. Co-meet manager and BYST organizer Kim Isaak said she was excited to see so many teams and athletes out for the event, which showcased how the versatility of their pool.

"It's fabulous to have our own space," said Issak.

Before the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre was completed, the BYST would have to train out of several different pools around the area.

With the completion of the centre, the team was given a new home, one that allowed them to train regularly and host events such as the championship meet.

Issak was part of the nerve centre for this event, watching from the lifeguard's office, where she updated times and made note of who was doing well.

"Swimming is all about their times," said Isaak, her eyes watching the pool through the glass. "As they get their own

personal best times, they get faster and faster, this will be the first sort of entry-level of qualifying."

However entry-level this meet may be for some athletes, for others it will be the start of a long swimming career.

"Some of these kids could be future Olympians," said Issak.

Medals were awarded to the first, second and third place finishers in each event. Awards were also given out on a team basis, with the team having the best overall time across the board receiving first place.

## Nursing student cares about the health of others

*Special events planned to provide information on local health services*

By Sarah Taylor

A busy and passionate second-year nursing student is hard at work to give students the opportunity to learn about local health services.

Mahogania Hines, 27, has put together the first Health Awareness Market here at Loyalist College, running now until Wednesday.

"I'm on student government as well and I'm the health sciences leader so I felt it was my responsibility to show the students what we do have available within the school," said Hines.

The focus of the market is to get students thinking about their own physical, mental and emotional health and what it means to them.

For improving mental health, there are St. John's Ambulance therapy dogs, alternative therapy such as a therapeutic touch healer, and counselling at the school.

"I wanted people to know that we have counselling services available that are free. Being a student is extremely

stressful all year, not just at exam time," said Hines.

Mood-changing lights will also be a part of the market. According to Hines, there are three people within the school that suffer from seasonal affective disorder, which affects depression from lack of vitamin D in fall and winter seasons.

"The light actually provides you with vitamin D," said Hines.

Hines and others involved with the market are setting up a blood pressure station. This started on Monday until noon Wednesday in the Lancer lounge. For smokers, it is an option to have it taken before and after having a ciga-

rette to show the impact smoking has on your blood pressure and your health.

"It's good to make people aware of their body and their health. If you're not healthy, you can't really study that well," said Loyalist student Behzad Tagik, while getting his blood pressure taken.

The timing of the Health Awareness Market is to correspond with New Year's resolutions, which often includes goals of improving one's health.

"I definitely wanted to have it at the end of January because everybody's got their New Year's resolutions at the beginning of the year and health is kind of in the forefront of their mind... I wanted to reintroduce the idea of reevaluat-

ing your health," said Hines.

Hines is also involved with the food services committee. Last week, they had a heart-healthy menu and they are continuing to accommodate vegan and vegetarian students as well as providing healthier options in the cafeteria.

"I try to advocate for healthy food at an affordable rate... They have the two for \$5 on fruits and veggies... They are trying to incorporate it in a way that we can actually afford it because the reality is, I don't think it's overly accessible," says Hines.

Hines and her team are hoping to continue the Health Awareness Market each month.

## Weekend of SnoFest activities

By Sarah Taylor

It was a true Canadian winter wonderland as the sled dogs tore through the fairgrounds at Marmora's annual SnoFest.

The event brought many participants and spectators to the Marmora Fairgrounds this past weekend to enjoy dogsledding and other winter activities.

"It's hard to find something to do when you don't have a mountain around in the winter... I think the community enjoys having something to do and they really want us to do it well," said the chair of the festival, Jennifer Bennett.

SnoFest held several sled dog races as well as skijoring (skiing while pulled by one dog) and art displays. The dogsledding races were cancelled last year and the festival has been cancelled twice since 2008. Increased social media and excited locals contributed to a successful turnout this year.

This was Bennett's first year as chair; she joined the board in October of last year. She remembered coming to the festival when she was little and said she hopes to use her marketing skills towards rebranding it.

"I was looking for something to do to start working within the community and I love dogs, I remember going to SnoFest as a kid so I was excited to get involved in that," said Bennett, who has never been on a sled.

Among the changes are the sled dog races. They are now 10 and 20-mile races rather than 150 miles and take place in the trails around Marmora's

fairgrounds. The longer race went from Marmora to Maynooth and took several days to finish. This has been taken out of the festival for several years now.

"We wanted to do shorter races so that there were more starts and finishes for everyone who is watching. We really wanted to make it as much of a spectator sport as we could because without them, we can't really have a festival," said Bennett.

For some of the mushers, the event was closer to home than others. Mushers from Quebec, New York and all over Ontario brought their dogs and sleds to the races.

Frank Horn, from Elphin, Ont., has been coming to SnoFest to participate in the dog sled races for eight years.

He said he likes "when they go fast and swishing through the bushes, just the adrenaline."

He owns 19 dogs and nine puppies. This year, he raced 13 of them.

"The rest of the dogs... they're slower and most of them are tired and then there's some that just don't get the concept."

Horn placed sixth in the 20-mile, eight-dogsled race in which he was one of 10 mushers.

Once results from this year's SnoFest are reviewed, the organization will spend the next year undergoing plans to rebrand the festival for 2015. Bennett said she hopes to get bigger sponsors involved. SnoFest is to be held again on the first weekend of February.

For a multi-media version of this story, go to <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=34037>



Photo by Maggie Naylor

Kathy MacKay leads her dogs to the finish line at Marmora's SnoFest on Sunday. MacKay finished with a time of 44 minutes and 55 seconds, placing fifth out of 15 racers.