



Grand Prize Submission

# St. Leonard Minor Hockey Association



 Canadian Company Proudly Supporting Canada's Game 



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## Tell us about your hockey association.

Hockey St-Leonard, has been around for over 50 years, helping kids the best they could and the best they knew with the means we have. Throughout the years we have seen 2 big names coming through our arenas who have made the NHL, 2 goalies that have impacted the vision of many kids and been a big inspiration. Around 20-25 years ago, St-Leonard Hockey hosted one of – if not the biggest – Midget (M18) tournament in Canada, even in North America, with over 40 teams playing on a 3-week base. There were teams from Quebec, United States, Russia, Sweden. The best part of all is that the team from out of town would be welcomed to stay in our St-Leonard family's homes. We would work hand in hand with some volunteers from sun youth. That's just the kind of association that St-Leonard hockey is, it's a family first association.

## How would you describe your community?

We have a community that is multicultural, just like every other cities in Canada, I suppose, with different religions, different beliefs, and different opinions, and most of all different struggles. It is a community that knows how to communicate and knows how to make sure we understand each other and that works together. We also know how to have fun together.

City hall, a few times a year organizes in the community park different events, each representing a specific culture with their own music, their own food and everyone is welcome to appreciate the culture and, of course, have fun.

## What role does hockey play in your community?

The role that hockey has been playing in the community, I believe is the same in all communities and every sport, I hope which is keeping all kids safe and parents less worried about them. Let me explain.

Hockey is an 8-month program, at least in Quebec, from September to the end of April. Therefore as a parent knowing that my kids are at the arena 2 times a week for practice and once a week for a game, makes me worry less as a parent, than knowing if they are outside getting in trouble or causing trouble, to the point that some parents drop off their kids and go grocery shopping or just come back later than expected, because they know there is someone looking after them no matter what, myself being one of the volunteers being at the arena 2-3 times a week not including weekends where myself and a few others spent around 10 hours per day on Saturday and Sunday. The other benefit that I see is that on a cold stormy winter night and you don't want to go visit anyone at their home, well funny enough they meet up at the arena to watch a random practice or a random game playing in the arena, where they can have a hot coffee or hot chocolate or even eat something because we have a bistro in our arena.



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## What challenges exist in your community that keep kids from playing hockey?

The main struggle nowadays, that I believe surpassed the religion struggle, is affordability, with the economy of nowadays and I can only speak about Montreal because I don't follow other city's economy, is that the community cannot afford much housing or rent for that matter; therefore I cannot imagine new generation parents trying to afford hockey expenses like registration that go anywhere from \$175 to \$600 per kid just for recreational, plus if your kid is any good he or she will have to pay an extra \$175 for them to be in the competitive program. We have some parents that tell us that their kids would like to play goalie, but unfortunately goalie equipment is much more expensive than a regular player, a goalie equipment goes between \$1,000 to \$3,000 all depending on the size of the child. Some religions can't permit for girls to play with boys.

Back 10 – 15 years ago the community was different now with more and more immigrants from different parts of the world, they play the sport that is most watched back where they are from or because they don't have hockey rinks back home, so they play soccer. For example, to play soccer it will cost you between \$150 and \$300 depending on the age or calibre of the kid, then you need to purchase a pair of shoes and shin guards, maybe \$80 for shoes and \$40 for the shin guards, so they will play soccer because that's the sport they grew up with, or they just don't know the game of hockey or just can't afford it, which is OK we need to respect all of the different reasons.

## What is your hockey association currently doing to overcome these challenges?

The St-Leonard association does what it can with the means it has. Because we have been around for many years, there are some parents like myself who have an 11-year-old boy and an 8-year-old girl that play hockey and some of us have kept our kids' old hockey equipment. Instead of selling it, we reuse it sometimes to help out other kids. We as an association, ask some of our hockey players to invite a school friend to come to the arena to watch a practice or a game to see if maybe they would like the sport enough to even try it. But being a non-profit organization there is not much we can do because of the lack of funds.

Nowadays we are trying our best to help the kids by associating ourselves with a program between Bauer and the Montreal Canadians, the program is called First Shift. This consists in offering a program that is offered to kids that never played any hockey before at a cost of under \$300 per kid, they get fully equipped by Bauer and the Montreal Canadians as an amazing retired hockey player named Gilbert Delorme who comes to visit and helps out St-Leonard volunteers hockey coaches to teach them the basics of hockey and make sure that all the kids are all having fun, it is a program that last 1 hour a week for 6 weeks.

It is amazing and rewarding to see kids smiling week after week.



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**Please share the association's vision for using the \$75,000 Grand Prize to encourage more kids to play hockey by developing solutions that look to remove barriers in the game of hockey and make the game more accessible, inclusive and equitable for everyone?**

Hockey St-Leonard having the proper funds would do some advertisement in the local newspaper, pamphlets, posters that we can put in local stores and schools.

We already have some girls in our teams and it would be amazing to try and get a lot more girls, to make a girls team. As I have mentioned, we have a program with Bauer and the Montreal Canadiens but that program brings kids from all other cities, which we don't get any inscriptions from it, because in Québec the rules are you can sign up for hockey but you cannot play wherever you want, you need to sign up and belong to that specific association (geographically), so we would like to keep that program with them because we do it for the kids and the love of the game, but we would like to come up with the same program but just for our community. So invite parents to sign up on our website and not have any payment for the registration and then pay for the equipment as well.

So for example if we get just 20 kids to sign up that means we would have to purchase 20 times the equipment which we would lend to them for the program because we won't know if the kids will like hockey or not, so by lending it and they don't like it we can reuse it the following years for the same program and that would cut a lot of expenses for the years to come.

Then we would have to get more ice time for these kids, get more camps done with qualified coaches to get them prepared for the season and make them feel that they belong in the team, because we all know that when kids are new at something and they are put in a team where the kids have been playing it for quite a while it can be hard on some kids mentally and physically.

Some of the money would also be paying for the new kids hockey tournament fees, all our teams usually sign up between 2 and 3 tournaments per year.

Also invest some of the budget on off ice camps like synthetic ice with a local camp, but just for the new registrations. We at St-Leonard, at our Martin Brodeur arena the ice gets melted as of April 28<sup>th</sup> until the last weekend of August therefore we can ask permission to the city to do some ball hockey so the kids don't lose interest in hockey and we can skills camps



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## Kruger Big Assist Grand Prize Proposal

First budget: \$25,000

First week of August, so we can prepare posters to put up in the parks, pamphlets and flyers so we can leave them in local stores or have a company put them in everyone's mailbox and schools.

Helps for the free registration and the equipment we need to purchase for these kids.

Second Budget: \$25,000

Last week of September, putting in place once a week program with professionals, to reinforce skating and a goalie program for new goalies.

Also to sign these kids to their annual 2-4 tournaments that they will be participating in and making sure that their parents can follow them in whatever city they go to.

Also to make them fall in love with the game it would be great to bring them to watch real live NHL games where the experience they will go through will be unforgettable.

This will be enough to go through the offseason camps that I would like to implement with the city when the ice gets melted in the end of April, so the kids don't lose interest in hockey, by organizing some ball hockey at times and some skill drills, puck handling and target shooting drills.

This would be an amazing program because it would be open to all kids that would like to try it, we would supply the hockey sticks, the pucks the targets and obviously the volunteers.

The third and fourth budget \$25,000 each at the same dates for the following year

Would be the same and exact as the previous year when we all started this program with some modifications by learning from our mistakes or tweaking it so we can make it better. The great news about it is that it would be basically a 2-year program and it would fit in the 18-month Kruger Program. Meanwhile we, as an association, would have to have a plan to be able to continue this program after this amazing partnership is over between St-Leonard Hockey and Kruger Big Assist Challenge, by finding a way of raising money so we can be an inspiration to all minor hockey associations and show that it is possible to make a difference for the kids of the community and for the love of the game of Hockey.

Regardless of the outcome for the final prize, the St-Leonard minor hockey league, myself and on behalf of the future hockey player of this community, we would like to say a Big thank you to The Kruger Big Assist Challenge and the amazing people behind all of this and that makes all this possible.

This is lots of money given away to make life easier for lots of kids. All this to say keep up the amazing work that you have been doing for the past 10 years.



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## Kruger Big Assist Grand Prize Proposal

	Q4 2025 Q1 2026	Q2 – Q3 2026	Month 13 - 18	Total
<b>Program # 1</b>				
Marketing / Advertising	\$25,000			\$25,000
<b>Program # 2</b>				
Skills Programs / Tournaments		\$25,000		\$25,000
<b>Program # 3</b>				
New Program			\$12,500	\$12,500
<b>Program # 4</b>				
New Program			\$12,500	\$12,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>



**Kruger**  
**BIG ASSIST**

**WE'VE COMMITTED OVER**  
**\$1 MILLION**  
**TO GIVE MORE KIDS**  
**ACCESS TO HOCKEY**



 **CANADIAN COMPANY PROUDLY**  
**SUPPORTING CANADA'S GAME**