Press Release

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Fort Drum volunteers support winter fun at community skating rink

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- The ice-skating rink opened Jan. 5 for Mountain Community Home residents to enjoy at Fort Drum, thanks in part to a team of volunteers who will keep it operational through the winter season.

Chris Altman, Resident Advisory Board president, met with new volunteers before the opening to show them the basics of opening and closing the rink and how to use the manual ice resurfacer.

“We have a pretty big population of volunteers here who love ice skating and hockey, and they want their kids to be able to play too,” Altman said. “So that works in our favor, because this is something the whole family can have fun with.”

Roughly 14 family members volunteered last year during the rink’s inaugural season, which was enough for several weeks of open skate and pickup hockey games. After a warm spell cast over Fort Drum in March, the rink remained open for roller skating.

Altman said that having a rink is a source of pride for Mountain Community Homes residents because of the fact it is completely volunteer-driven.

“If it wasn’t for the volunteers, we would not be able to keep the rink open,” he said. “But it worked out great, because we have a great team of volunteers who want this for the community.”

Jessica Morales loves a cold, snowy winter, and she said volunteering at the rink is an opportunity to invite people to take advantage of the weather.

“I think winter and cold weather can be really intimidating for some people,” she said. “So anything we can do to let people know it’s OK to get outside, experience the weather, and maybe have some fun should be encouraged.”

Morales said she looks forward to getting her 3-year-old and 7-year-old onto the ice.

“They’ve done some ice skating before, but, again, it’s about fostering and encouraging them to do the things they might not have somewhere else,” she said. “You can’t just go anywhere and ice skate outside, unless you have a rink like this or the weather to do this. So why wouldn’t you want to take advantage of it?”

Morales said she learned on social media that the rink was volunteer-driven, and that the community gets out of it what they put in.

“I thought it was great that if you want your family and friends to have the chance to enjoy it, then you have to help support it,” she said. “I’m all for it. If we’ve got this opportunity, I will gladly support it.”

Joe Beardsley and his family arrived at Fort Drum last August, and it didn’t take him long to find the rink off Indigo Way in the Monument Ridge housing area.

“When I found out there was a rink, I thought, ‘This is awesome,’” he said. “And when we came here the first day, it was locked up, and I was trying to figure out what to do or who to call to get it open.”

That’s when Beardsley started volunteering at the rink.

“I would bring my kids out here in the summer, and I play hockey with some of my neighbors, and we’d come out here for some roller hockey,” he said. “I have my kids in hockey this year, so this is going to be a way for us to come out and practice a little bit.”

His wife also signed up to volunteer, which made it easier to have one of them open the rink in the morning, and the other close it at the end of the day.

“It’s nice being able to do something like this to assist the community, and it gives people something fun to do,” Beardsley said.

Altman said additional volunteers are always welcome, and they can message him at [www.facebook.com/people/Fort-Drum-Mountain-Community-Homes-Skate-Rink](https://usg01.safelinks.protection.office365.us/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fpeople%2FFort-Drum-Mountain-Community-Homes-Skate-Rink&data=05%7C02%7Clisa.r.albrecht.civ%40army.mil%7Cd65f9c20584a472023b908dd2f2129c4%7Cfae6d70f954b481192b60530d6f84c43%7C0%7C0%7C638718541790942237%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zZXhHwJeMkVw8T5If70A2824dqSkBm45qRyPZ%2BpiKYk%3D&reserved=0).

Community members looking for more volunteer opportunities can contact the Fort Drum Army Volunteer Corps Program at (315) 772-2899, or visit the office inside the Family Resource Center, Bldg. 11042 on Mount Belvedere Boulevard.

(Editor’s Note: This article is part of a limited series on volunteerism at Fort Drum, leading up to National Volunteer Appreciation Month in April.)

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Photo Captions –

Rink1: Mountain Community Homes residents volunteer at the community ice rink in the Monument Ridge housing area, which opened Jan. 5 for the winter season. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

Rink2: Chris Altman, Fort Drum Resident Advisory Board president, shows new volunteers the daily operations at the community ice rink in the Monument Ridge housing area on Jan. 4. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)