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It says something about Tammy Greidanus' popularity and prowess as a skating coach when the club she left to come to Sherwood Park put her up for an auspicious award even though she was on her way out the door.

Greidanus, who has been with the Sherwood Park Figure Skating Club (SPFSC) for almost a year, was recently recognized as one of Skate Canada's Best of the Best (BOB) CanSkate coaches in Canada.

She was nominated by the Figure 8 Skating Club in Edmonton, where she grew up as a skater and coached for over 15 years, before moving to the Park program.

The more than 50 nominees for the Best of the Best program were asked to submit a long list of criteria which demonstrated their ability to deliver an elite CanSkate program.

The top 10 nominees, including Greidanus, were invited to an all-expenses paid trip to Toronto for Skate Canada's national coaching conference and AGM in May of this year.

Greidanus was blown away when she found out that she had been selected to the top 10.

"I was very surprised that they had nominated me," she said. "They hadn't told me. I was thrilled. There were only three from the West, so that was quite a big deal. Especially considering the criteria we had to go through to receive the award. It's quite extensive. It's a pretty big deal. It was a great honour to be recognized among my peers."

With the exception of another coach from Calgary and one from B.C., all of the other CanSkate coaches came from Ontario.

The CanSkate program is an introduction to the ice for potential young hockey and figure skaters, with programs for three to five-year olds and five-and up.

Greidanus said that the recent honour was only made more satisfying by the fact that she doesn't even really consider it work.

"Teaching skating has always been a passion of mine and I think it is true that if you love what you do then you will never work another day in your life," she said. "So when I was recognized as one of the Best of Best Can- Skate coaches, it was like fuel for my passion."

During the conference, the 10 honourees participated in a three-day training session conducted by Monica Lockie -- chairperson of the advisory coaching committee.

The training program topics included an in-depth look at the existing CanSkate program, the proposed changes to CanSkate to be implemented in 2011, and an on-ice live CanSkate session with 20 young Can- Skaters held at the official practice arena of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Coaches also had the opportunity to share best practices, trouble-shoot issues, and participate in other informative coaching seminars and events.

Another highlight of the experience for Greidanus was the opportunity to meet Canadian Olympic skater Patrick Chan, and Olympic gold medalists Scott Moir and Tessa Virtue.

The intention of the BOB program is to improve the quality and consistency of Skate Canada CanSkate sessions by providing training to BOBs which gives them the knowledge, resources and tools to share with fellow coaches and clubs.

"This was a fantastic opportunity for networking and professional development and I was fortunate to be a part of it," Greidanus said. "It really helped me to reinforce that the things that I were doing on the ice were good things. It also gave me a ton of new ideas to bring to my CanSkate lessons. The CanSkate program is quite an exciting one. This just gave me some ideas on how to make it more exciting."

Just as exciting has been her move to the Park program.

"It's a fantastic club," she said. "It is very well organized. It's quite a competitive club, too. They train the kids well from a young age and then streamline them into where their interests might lie, whether that be figure skating or hockey. I am very excited to be a part of it."

Greidanus is running all of the SPFSC CanSkate sessions this year, amounting to 10 per week.

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