



NEWS

Glendale's first ice-skating rink opens, bringing holiday cheer to City Hall



Aubrey Ignacio, 16, of Burbank, performs during the launch of Glendale's first seasonal ice-skating rink. Located behind City Hall, the rink will be open every day until Jan. 6. (Tim Berger / Glendale News Press)

By LILA SEIDMAN

NOV. 26, 2019
5:43 PM



On Friday afternoon, Glendale's first-ever ice-skating rink opened behind City Hall, where children wearing the SoCal equivalent of winter apparel sipped hot cocoa and wrestled on skates, Glendale city officials sported Santa hats and holiday sweaters, and local police officers who play ice hockey as a hobby passed pucks on fresh ice.

"We want you to enjoy this," Glendale Mayor Ara Najarian said before cutting the ribbon and welcoming a series of young competitive skaters onto the rink to perform.

Glendale City Council members [set aside \\$500,000 of taxpayer money in June](#) to open the city's seasonal rink, an expenditure Najarian noted in his opening speech had soured some people on the idea. Councilwoman Paula Devine voted against allocating the money, saying at the time that it was her "duty to be fiscally responsible." City officials hope to recoup about \$150,000 in ticket sales.

"There are some grinchies out there who wanted to steal Christmas. They said, 'Don't do it,'" Najarian said. "So let the sounds and the visions of young children enjoying the ice-skating rink [appear] when they're on social media saying what kind of a bad idea this was for the city of Glendale."

He added, "Let's prove them wrong," garnering applause.

The dozens of children in attendance, of all experience levels, seemed most interested in getting a crack at the ice.

Nicole Hayrapetian, 9, said she skates at least once a year with friends.

"It's like I'm flying," Hayrapetian, of Glendale, said of skating.

Chloe Tan, also 9, said she was mostly excited about the prospect of staying upright. Last time she tried skating, at 5 years old, it was hard to get the hang of it.

“I want to try again and see if I can actually do it,” said Tan, who attends Valley View Elementary School.

Jacqueline Schenk, a 12-year-old Toll Middle School student, is no stranger to the rink.

The daughter of a former competitive ice skater, Schenk said she practices skating six times a week and has aspirations to one day make it to the Winter Olympics.

On Friday, Schenk performed a solo number during the opening ceremony. Her bright red skating dress adorned with rhinestones shimmered as she twirled in mid-air to Ariana Grande’s [“Santa Tell Me.”](#)

When she first ventured onto the ice at age 3, she said didn’t like it much. But as she became better, her enjoyment grew.

“[Now], it’s part of who I am,” Schenk said.

Members of the Glendale Police Department also joined in on the holiday fun.

Several officers, who regularly play ice hockey together, showed off their skills before the rink opened to the public. Afterward, some of the police officers stuck around and helped some young skaters make their way around the ice.

“We believe in community policing and connecting with the community.” Glendale Police Chief Carl Povilaitis said. “This is community policing — getting to connect with the kids.”

Glendale's ice skating rink will be open seven days a week, including Christmas Day and New Year's Day, until Jan. 6. General admission is \$12 and skate rental is \$5.

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