THE NEW PRAGUE TIMES

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2019
Location: NEW PRAGUE, MN
Circulation (DMA): 4,640 (15)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (W)
Page: 9
Section: Main
Keyword: Partners in Policymaking

Young skater enjoying time on ice despite disabilities

Patrick Fisher
The New Prague Times

During the New Prague Area Figure Skating Club's Spring Skate Show there were Learn to Skate members participating. Among the group was Mia Pedersen, daughter of Bret and Jennifer Pedersen of New Prague. Mia, 7, was enjoying her time on the ice with her peers.

It was something that two years ago her mom wasn't certain she would be able to do, but wanted to give Mia the chance to try. Mia has both hearing and vision disabilities and hypotonia, low muscle tone. "She wanted to try it and I reached out to one of the directors of the club," said Jennifer. She added that Mia decided she wanted to try figure skating because her big sister Ady, 11, was taking lessons. After discussing Mia's disabilities with a representative of the club, they felt strongly that lessons should be available to anyone who wanted to try. Jennifer explained that Mia was provided extra help and loved being with her peers in lessons.

"She did awesome," said Jennifer, who felt lucky that Mia was able to participate in lessons. "She was so excited. Every Saturday she is excited to get over here (to the ice arena). It's also helped her core strength and body memory, so it's great in that way too."

"It's fun," said Ady about having her sister involved. "Sometimes it's a little hard and she struggles a bit, so I help her."

"She skates over and helps her out," said Jennifer.

Mia has also been in the Spring Skate Show for the last two years. This year she and the other Learn to Skate members participated in the "Baby Elephant Walk Remix." Dressed as baby elephants, they took their turn across the ice and Mia was there smiling and wav-

For Jennifer, a participant in the Partners in Policymaking leadership training and an advocate for community inclusion for people with disabilities, this a perfect example of what they are working for. "I am so proud that New Prague has such wonderful community recreation activities and our community is willing to include those with different levels of ability."

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Mia Pedersen, daughter of Bret and Jennifer Pedersen of New Prague, takes to the ice at the Spring Skate Show. Mia is a member of the Learn to Skate group in the New Prague Area Figure Skating Club. Even though she has vision and hearing impairments and hypotonia, low muscle tone, she has been taking skating lessons for two years.

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