

Whitney Minor Baseball returns in May



By Mike Riley

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Minor baseball is coming back to Whitney in May, after many years' absence. The Whitney Recreation Committee announced this via their Facebook page on March 27. There will be T-Ball (ages four to eight years) and baseball (ages nine to 13 years) offered to kids in the township and surrounding area. One of the organizers, Lance Zilney, comments on this new program for South Algonquin Township. This Minor Baseball programming will be offered from May 2 to June 20 at the Whitney ball diamond and will take place from 6:30 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. for the T-Ball and 7:15 p.m. to 8 p.m. for the baseball. Zilney, who's organizing the baseball with his wife Emily, Jason and Sandra Courneyea and the Whitney Recreation Committee, says that planning is going well and that registration for the baseball will be on April 25 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Whitney ball diamond. "Our oldest son is four-years-old. I played baseball my whole life. We grew up in the area, lived in Kitchener/Waterloo for a while and then moved back to the area. So just to get something happening in the community will be good for all kids within South Algonquin and the surrounding area," he says. Zilney says that minor baseball is coming back after an absence of many years. He recalls that Jason and Sandra Courneyea, who own the Algonquin Lunch Bar and gas station, organized a similar league about a decade ago. "So, our goal is to cover off the school aged group in the community because it does run from kindergarten to Grade 8. So that's kind of our focus," he says. Sandra Courneyea confirms that in 2017 and 2018, she and her husband and Jessica Robertson ran an all-school age ball league. "We did some skills training and finished each evening with a friendly game. We are excited to help Lance and Emily bring ball back to the community. This time, we will just be there as helpers," she says. The first few weeks of the baseball this summer will be dedicated to drills and learning the sport, according to Zilney, and he hopes they'll have enough kids sign up that they can have at least two teams per age category and be able to get some games going. Zilney says they've had a great reaction so far to the advertisements and lots of feedback from the community. He says that he and his wife Emily and the Courneyeas were the original four that started with the idea and it has taken off really well with the recreation committee also supporting the initiative. Zilney told Bancroft This Week that while the baseball is open to kids from South Algonquin, anyone who wants to commute in to participate is more than welcome. "We're super excited for the kids in the community to have something up and running. Unfortunately, with the weather this year, the outside rink didn't perform as well as it usually does so hopefully throughout the summer it'll be a great opportunity for the kids to get started playing baseball," he says. "We're looking forward to it for sure."