



MEDIA RELEASE

May 16, 2022

Elk Island Catholic Schools and Strathcona County partner to create an amazing community recreation opportunity in the modernized École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School

Sherwood Park... Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS) and Strathcona County have created an amazing recreational opportunity for the entire community through a gymnasium expansion in one of the oldest schools in the community.

Built in 1967, École Père Kenneth Kearns is currently operating as a Catholic French Immersion School serving 230 Kindergarten to Grade 4 students and 18 preschool students. Funding was provided in 2019 by Alberta Education to bring the facility up to health and safety standards and to modernize the school to improve program delivery.

Elk Island Catholic Schools invested a total of \$10.4 million towards the modernization of École Père Kenneth Kearns, located at 8 Sandpiper Drive, Sherwood Park. Strathcona County contributed \$2.8 million and expanded the gymnasium by 308 metres² to regulation size. Construction began in summer, 2019 and was completed in April of 2021.

"The gymnasium expansion is a timely win-win for our community and students. Through this partnership with the Elk Island Catholic School Board, we are able to provide an additional 1,000 hours of annual gymnasium time directly to our community. This partnership addresses our community's immediate recreation needs, while being fiscally responsible," says Mayor Rod Frank. "We've listened closely to our community's feedback on recreation and culture opportunities in the County, and we heard that gymnasium space is ranked as one of the top five indoor spaces needed by user groups. At the same time, we have achieved economic efficiencies by forming this productive relationship with Elk Island Catholic Schools. Enjoy the gym, both students and citizens."

"The Elk Island Catholic School Board of Trustees appreciates the strong partnership that exists between our organizations," says Ted Paszek, Elk Island Catholic School Board Chair. "I believe this enhancement is of good value and will provide excellent educational and extracurricular opportunities for County residents."

The larger regulation-sized gymnasium offers many benefits to the community that support a wider variety of use, including tournaments and community events, and with inclusion in mind, the facility is fully accessible with specially designed wheelchair seating and is set-up to support multiple activities in a shared space. Many youth and family programs and community programs offered through various leagues and associations also run out of the new gymnasium.

Activities include badminton, dodgeball, basketball, sportball, volleyball, baseball, flag football, triple ball, soccer, volt hockey and pickleball. With proximity to many outdoor, culture and recreation facility amenities, the gymnasium is the perfect place for day camps that will be offered throughout the summer as well. The County's funding assisted with the construction of dedicated space for gymnasium equipment storage, fully accessible locker/changerooms with showers, bleachers, flex/meeting space, and an after-hours community entrance to the gymnasium.

Strathcona County and Elk Island Catholic Schools have a long history of working together to find synergies in service delivery that benefit the community. A recent example is the Emerald Hills Regional Park and Leisure Centre sharing a site with Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School, which has generated many benefits to the high school and the overall community.

For booking inquiries, email EPKKbooking@strathcona.ca or visit strathcona.ca/gymnasiums for more information.

Contact:
Susan Johnson, Communications
Elk Island Catholic Schools
780-449-7487

Strathcona County
Communications
780-410-6595