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 | 05 Jan, 2005 | [WILBA owes much to Gaudin](#)

BY MICHAEL PIASETZKI - The Chronicle

Fourteen years ago, had anyone asked Kirkland resident Mike Gaudin if he could envision a day he would become president of a local basketball association he would have probably laughed.

Furthermore, had you asked him if he foresaw that under his vision and leadership — with a lot of help from fellow volunteers — the West Island Lakers Basketball Association (WILBA) would not only double in size, but form a partnership with the Sian Bradwell Fund and raise \$20,000 to date to help children with cancer at the Montreal Children's Hospital, he would have probably thought you're out of your mind.



Under his reign as president, Mike Gaudin has helped turn the West Island Lakers Basketball Association into one that cares. (Chronicle, Peter McCabe)

Fate has a strange way of molding everyone's lives though, and that is exactly what has happened to Gaudin since he first volunteered to coach at WILBA at the novice level in 1990. Because of those accomplishments and several key others, including helping develop one of the most respected house-league programs in the entire city, he will probably go down in the history of WILBA as one of its most valuable and highly-regarded achievers.

"Everyone at WILBA can blame my wife Carole for having me around all these years," Gaudin said. "She

registered my son Chris to play basketball, and a couple of weeks later I received a phone call about a coaches' meeting. I didn't know a darn thing about basketball back then, but I kept at it."

That he did, going on to not only to become a convener, but vice-president in charge of house league, and his current role as president, which he has held for the past four years. In between he also coached several girls' inter-city teams.

House league was, and will always be Gaudin's baby, though. As vice-president, he standardized the rule book, implemented a fair-play rule, added minor officials to improve scoring, spiced up uniforms, and started a girls' league.

He kept it in mind when as president, while watching a game during the annual Sian Bradwell Softball Tournament four summers ago, he came up with the idea of combining the house league all-star weekend in February with the Sian Bradwell Fund.

Through his hard work, contacts and resourcefulness, a charity game was set up at the end of the 2001 all-star weekend between members of the media and the Montreal Alouettes to raise money for the fund. Raffles were also held, and individual and group donations were accepted. The event was such a success that today, the all-star weekend has been renamed the Sian Bradwell/West Island Lakers Basketball Association All-Star Weekend.

"It's a true kids' event," Gaudin said. "Those who aren't selected can still come and watch the all-star games and the charity game with the Als. The weekend itself has grown, and even though they say you should learn how to walk before you run, we're getting close to seeing it become a sprint. The weekend shows we're an association that cares, and that's something I'm really proud of."

It truly has always been about the children for Gaudin, something that has not passed by WILBA vice-president in charge of house league and current bantam AAA Lakers head coach Steve Brayne.

"The one constant that I have noticed since Mike's become president is any decision we make as an executive concerning the association must be made with the kids in mind," he said. "That, I believe, has held us in pretty good standing, and has allowed us to offer a pretty good product."

Source: [The Chronicle](#)

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