

## What is the role of sport, recreation, and leisure in rural community life?

- What we know:
  - Sport clubs are often central social structures in rural communities (Townsend, Moore & Mahoney, 2002; Tonts, 2005)
- What we don't know:
  - Despite their importance to rural communities – we know very little about their role in rural Canada

## Investigating the (social) role of curling clubs in rural Canadian communities

- Ethnography / Case studies in two clubs per province/territory
  - *Summer*: brief site visits and interviews with key players in each club
  - *Winter*: participant observation, informal conversations, photography and video recording, document analysis in each club
    - “Bonspiel weekends” – (av. 30 hours in each club)

## Rural curling clubs are...

- windows into rural change
- part of community identity
- founded upon volunteerism and support
- places for valued family time
- sources of life-long social connections and physical activity
- ‘a *gathering place*’ for the community

## We can help increase participation in sport (and curling) by understanding...

- Broader issues of sport, recreation and leisure
  - Potential for community building
  - Importance of volunteers
  - Drastic need for infrastructure investment and support
- Issues specific to this case of curling:
  - The social connections
  - Inclusiveness
  - Life-long participation
  - Challenge of diversity