

Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent Bowling Association



We usually talk about leagues of ordinary bowlers but everyone needs a place where they feel included. I would like to highlight the Michael & Dorothy Graham Bowling league which first began in the early 60's. The league was first supported by the Alhambra organization. Alhambra is a fraternal organization which is dedicated to assisting persons who are intellectually disabled or handicapped. When Alhambra withdrew their support the ICHA (Italian Canadian Handicapped Association) took over support of the league.

The bowlers in this league are all adult bowlers who are intellectually disabled or who have some other handicap challenges. The league bowls on Saturday from 1-3 p.m. from September through May.

This league started at Crescent Lanes, and then moved from Rose Bowl to Superbowl where it still operates today. Mike Graham takes care of the league and proudly indicated that he wanted to continue something his parents started so many years ago. This is not a sanctioned league, but this league suits a much needed purpose within our organization.

Some bowlers need assistance, on some lanes they use bumpers on approximately 8 lanes, and some use a rack to roll the ball down the lanes.

The league uses approximately 22 lanes with 3 bowlers per lane. The league started with 50 bowlers but now lists 75 participants. Usually on a weekly basis they have 65-68 bowlers that show up to bowl. I asked Mike how does he decide who to allow to bowl if you do not have enough room? He indicated that unfortunately he has to let the regulars bowl and if there is room, those who show up infrequently bowl.

Some of the bowlers come with a parent, worker or a relative to help them out and some come by themselves. They also have many volunteers who provide assistance.

As previously mentioned each bowler bowls 3 games with 3 bowlers to each lane. Bowlers pay their own bowling. Bowlers are assigned to a certain lane for the whole year, and if they don't get along then some shifting of bowlers can occur.

Gary Crume, executive member from the ICHA, supplies the bowling shirts for the bowlers.

A local printer provides special score cards for each bowler to record his/her own scores. Volunteers help record the weekly scores on these score cards if required.

When the league first started they used to give the bowlers medals to hang around their neck but in time the medals were no longer seen as very important.

At the end of the season if there is enough money then a pizza party is arranged for the league.

Mike Graham and the rest of the ICHA (Italian Canadian Handicapped Association) do an exceptional job running this league for these bowlers.

Catherine Wilbur