

# Introducing...



## AquaCenter lands an international coach to head up new program

A former international-class swimmer and coach is forming a new competitive swim club in Newmarket.

Gudmundur Hafthorsson, a coach for Iceland's Junior National swim team at the Nordic Championships in 2009 and the holder of a number of Icelandic swim records, will be at the helm of the AquaCenter Vikings, based out of the AquaCenter Swim School on Stellar Drive.

A dual citizen of Iceland and Canada, Hafthorsson is affectionately known as 'Coach G', and, in his prime, was the second-fastest backstroker in Iceland.

"We lucked out in gaining Coach G to lead the way," said Ellie Karkouti,

owner of the popular swim and aqua-fitness facility. "I knew of his record, of course, but it was the parents of some of our students who strongly suggested we get him to head up this new program. If anyone can develop future Olympic champions from our club, it's Coach G."

Because AquaCenter, established as a swim, fitness and aqua-rehab facility in 2005, didn't have a competitive swim team, students who wanted to advance would have to move on to another club, she said.

"We always wanted to have a competitive team, but we didn't want to start it up without a truly amazing

coach," said Karkouti. "Now, with Coach G, a great coaching staff and our own 25 meter saltwater training pool, we can offer them another option."

Coach G, who recently moved to Aurora with his family, said the AquaCenter initiative is the opportunity of a lifetime.

"It's an exciting thing to grow a competitive swim team from scratch," said Coach G, who began coaching in 1998 and currently holds records in relays and Master Swimmers in the 100-metre backstroke for swimmers 25 to 29.

"We'll also be building a development team. There are lots of competitions in

Ontario and across Canada. It's great for me to be involved in the establishment of a new venture and, with the great AquaCenter facility; we have everything we need to build a championship team."

Karkouti, a strong swimmer whose background is in physiotherapy, also owns the Trinity Swim School in Vaughan and said Coach G is also establishing a special summer training camp for York Region youngsters who may – or may not – move on to competitive swimming.

"We've always had a summer camp for kids, but this new training camp sets some new standards. This camp is a new concept and can offer something for all our students."



**1215 Stellar Dr.,  
Newmarket**

**905.895.AQUA (2782)**

**www.aquacenternewmarket.com**

**10% OFF**  
IF YOU REGISTER BY  
JULY 31, 2011

**HOURS:**  
Mon.-Thurs. 7:30am-7:00pm  
(lane pass holders)  
all others... 9:00am-7:00pm  
Saturday 8:00am-1:00pm  
Sundays 9:00am-1:00pm  
**CLOSED SUNDAYS IN JULY & AUGUST**

