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To Serve & Savour could be biggest-ever fundraiser for Wounded Warriors



Chef Jonathan Goodyear is pictured at the Magna Golf Club. Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

Renowned chefs from across Canada ? including those who have tangled with the Iron Chefs ? are set to put their culinary skills to the test right here in Aurora next month, benefiting people among us who have shown an iron-clad commitment to our community, but live every day paying a silent price.

Serve & Savour, which will take place under the Hoedown Tent on Friday, September 7, will bring together the talents of noted Canadian chefs Cory Vitiello, Jason Bangerter (Langdon Hall), Victor Barry (Piano Piano), and Afrim Pristine, the world's youngest cheese master, in what promises to be the single biggest fundraiser ever for Wounded Warriors Canada.

Each chef was brought into the fold by Jonathan Goodyear, Executive Chef at Magna Golf Course, who says he immediately jumped at the chance to make a difference for Wounded Warriors' mental health programs, including supports for service personnel and first responders living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

?I am not good at much, but I can bring people together and I have a good list of chefs who are always willing to come on board and help us raise some money,? says the self-deprecating Mr. Goodyear. ?Mental health is something that effects everyone. It effects my family directly, I have people who work for me it effects, and it effects everyone in a different way. If I can be any part of helping the first responders or anyone for that matter get help, you can sign me up.?

That's exactly what Steve Hinder of Magna for the Community did.

Serve and Savour is the brainchild of Mr. Hinder and York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe, who were looking to do something that was ?unique and memorable? and they hit upon the idea of using the Hoedown tent, which traditionally goes up a week before the event takes place in mid-September.

Providing support for the York Regional Police family living with PTSD is a cause very close to Chief Jolliffe's heart, and it is also a cause that has long been close to the heart of Mr. Hinder, who served with the Toronto Police Force for over 30 years.

?We went through the good, the bad and the ugly,? says Mr. Hinder on his time in uniform. ?In policing terms, there are just some things you see that are difficult to ever forget and you get into situations with some concern, stress or trauma in your lives. I was always lucky to have a great support network around me, but there were others who didn't.

?I worked with people who suffered from post traumatic stress disorder. One in particular incident that happened where police officer I went to police college with, six years after we graduated, was murdered. The responding special weapons team led by this sergeant wasn't able to get in and rescue him and listened to him dying and couldn't make it happen. That haunted that supervisor his entire life. It led to addiction issues and led eventually to suicide. He rented a room at a motel and they went in and found all the newspaper clippings.?

Wounded Warriors Canada made an organizational shift in 2016 to broaden its umbrella from men and women who served in the

Canadian Armed Forces, and their families, to also include First Responders with mental health supports.
Scott Maxwell, Executive Director of Wounded Warriors Canada, says York Regional Police was one of the first police services in Canada to ?step up and want to help us? and put them in contact with their members who might be able to benefit from their services.
?We started having conversations on the various ways to raise funds to support the provision of our mental health programs for first responders and their families because all of what we do is privately funded,? says Mr. Maxwell. ?It takes a lot of revenue to make these very transformational mental health programs possible. From that conversation, I was introduced to Steve Hinder and the Stronach Group and the community foundation. With his policing background and relationship with the YRP over the years, Steve came to us and said he wanted to really help us raise money for what we do for first responders. At that time, the Chief, myself and Steve met and the To Serve and Savour event was born.
?I was just thrilled because one of the things we are always fearful of is the demand for our services outstrips our ability to fund delivery of the programs. I think they were all cognizant of that and we, as a group, were cognizant of that reality, so it was an opportunity for us to raise substantial funds. If this all goes as we're hoping to, it could be the single largest fundraising event in the history of Wounded Warriors Canada. You can imagine the feeling I had knowing how these funds are going to be used to literally change and save lives and families. We're ecstatic and we're hopeful the community will come out and support. One thing I can assure the community and all those who will be in attendance is their support will change and save lives and families.?
Those in attendance are also promised a fun and entertaining evening while making a real difference.

For more information on To Serve and Savour, including tickets, visit www.yrp.ca/en/community/To-Serve-and-Savour.asp.