

Dine out for a good cause at Wednesday's Taste for Life

By Brock Weir

If you're looking for a good way to spice up your Wednesday night and help out a good cause at the same time, York Region's Taste for Life is just around the corner.

Three Aurora restaurants – as well as two restaurants apiece in Newmarket and Richmond Hill – are getting ready to pull out all the stops for a memorable night next Wednesday, April 20, with 25% of each bill going back to the AIDS Committee of York Region and their community programs.

This year's bill of fare includes a \$50 prix fixe menu at Aqua Grill from 5 p.m. onwards with a reservation, two seatings of High Tea in the afternoon at Bonsai Hill at Yonge and Wellington, and a \$49 prix fixe menu at Scorpion Mediterranean Bar and Grill on Bayview Avenue at Pedersen.

"It is really fun," says Scorpion Chef Marcello Anastasi. "It is great to be out there and bring in some music and see people have fun – and on Wednesday night not much is happening anyway. This is a good cause and it is a great organization too."

Scorpion has been on the roster with the event for over five years. In fact, all three Aurora participants are returning for more.

"Wednesdays are a night when most restaurants want to do something to encourage business for themselves and, at the same time, contribute to a worthy cause," says Mark Koning, Communications & Administration Coordinator for the AIDS Committee of York Region. "We try to recruit some volunteers and have staff and Board members go out to the various locations, and we also have sponsors such as TD to help host these restaurant and tell people who are dining what we're really about, what we're doing, and what this event really gives back to the organization – and the feedback has always been great!"

When people hear of the role they are playing in supporting the AIDS Committee, it is something he said that they're often not aware of as AIDS and HIV are not talked about as much these days. It engages people about the needs of York Region residents affected by HIV and AIDS, including the challenges they face in receiving treatment.

"The money that is raised goes to our programs such as Drive to Care and our wellness programs," says Mr. Koning. "People enjoy hearing those stories and knowing they are giving back to something specific. Drive to Care really helps people get to their medical appointments. We don't have many services for HIV and AIDS here in York Region, so people find themselves going to Toronto. This lets us put money into getting people the care they need."

"We don't have a whole lot [of resources]. It is more worthwhile to people when they know exactly what it is going towards, and when they can learn a little bit more about us that is always a benefit."

To learn a little bit more about A Taste for Life, participating restaurants, and the AIDS Committee of York Region as a whole, visit www.atasteforlife.org/york-region.html.