

Mental Health in Motion raises nearly \$170,000 for youth programs

If you see the colourful MOBYSS bus in your neighbourhood providing mental health services to youth where they need it most, it is all thanks to the community.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) of York Region and South Simcoe has nearly 170,000 reasons to celebrate as fundraising efforts for their annual Mental Health in Motion exceeded its goal by more than 35 per cent.

Mental Health in Motion is the CMHA's biggest annual fundraiser. Having had to take a back seat last year due to the global pandemic, the event was retooled and re-launched this past spring with individual fundraising and virtual components to foster a sense of community.

With a target of raising \$125,000, thanks to a whopping 350 participants, as well as more corporate sponsorship and donations than ever before, they easily surpassed this with a grand total of \$168,640.

"We express our deepest gratitude and thank all our sponsors, donors, and participants for helping us raise critically-needed funds for youth mental health programs and services," says Rebecca Shields, CEO of CMHA York Region South Simcoe. "A special thank you to our top fundraising participants, The Bipolar Express team who raised \$43,490, Team Jake who raised \$23,619, and Judy Brunton who raised \$16,566. The youth of our communities need us now more than ever and I cannot thank all of you enough for supporting them, and CMHA's vision of mental health for all.

The local branch of the CMHA offers several programs for youth over the age of 12, including the MOBYSS (pronounced "mo-bees") bus, the first mobile mental health clinic for youth between the ages of 12 and 25 in all of Ontario.

The bus travels to places in York Region and South Simcoe to offer free support for mental health, physical health, and sexual health support. Other programs geared towards youth include telephone counselling lines, Youth Wellness, supports for youth and adults experiencing mild to moderate depression, newcomer support and more.

"We are absolutely delighted at the success of what was our first virtual event," says Catherine Matzig, Senior Director, Philanthropy, for the CMHA York Region and South Simcoe. "We are absolutely thrilled at how many individuals and organizations are recognizing the importance of accessible mental health programs and services for our youth, but also anybody of any age in our community. That is really what the CMHA York and South Simcoe is here to do: provide mental health support to those who are struggling. We talk about the fact that it is okay not to be okay, but it is not okay to struggle alone. That's why we're here.

"At the end of the day, these groups are really passionate about the cause and the event because they have been touched, or their families have been touched by mental health and they have a passion because they understand it. They understand the importance of supports being available in the community.

"We're looking forward to being back on the road (with MOBYSS) and back in schools, providing service in both MOBYSS and the youth wellness programming. We're looking forward to being back in person when it is appropriate and being back as strong members of the community. We have also learned a lot from the pandemic and we intend to continue providing virtual services as well, recognizing for some individuals it is much more comfortable or easier to access our services in terms of transportation to access our services virtually. We look forward to continuing to provide a hybrid model of services that really takes into account the services of anyone who is seeking support.

"We're absolutely looking forward to continuing that momentum next year when we will hopefully be once again able to host Mental Health in Motion in person."

Save the date - if all goes according to plan, the next in-person Mental Health in Motion is slated for June 12, 2022.

For more information on the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe, MOBYSS, or any other programs, visit www.cmha-yr.on.ca. If groups, individuals and businesses want to host their own fundraising event, the CMHA would be thrilled to hear from you at donations@cmha-yr.on.ca.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter