Mental Health in Motion raises nearly $175,000 for MOBYSS youth programs

Running, walking or cycling, more than 400 community members in York Region and South Simcoe came together this month to raise much-needed funds for local mental health programs serving youth.

On Sunday, June 12, and with donations still rolling in through this Friday, July 1, the 2022 Mental Health in Motion, the premiere annual fundraiser for the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe raised $174,000 for MOBYSS (Mobile York South Simcoe), a bus that has been converted into an invaluable mobile mental health resource that comes to youth who need it the most.

?This year's Mental Health in Motion was amazing experience to see the smiles, the families, the friends and the community that we've built around mental health,? said Rebecca Shields, CEO of CMHA York South Simcoe (CMHA-YRSS) in a statement of the first in-person event since 2019. ?The community's involvement in this event matters more than ever because we don't know the lasting impact of the pandemic, but we know the solution is to access care through programs and services like MOBYSS.?

While the pandemic meant the CMHA-YRSS couldn't welcome youth in need through the doors of the bus, the programs they offered carried on nearly seamlessly online and over the phone from the earliest days of COVID-19.

?The MOBYSS team never stopped working throughout the pandemic,? says Catherine Matzig, Senior Director of Philanthropy for the CMHA-YRSS. ?We couldn't have the bus on the road or invite young people to join us on the bus, but we were able [to have] virtual drop-in clinics, one-on-one counselling by phone or text, working with youth over Zoom ? we have never stopped taking young people's calls. Certainly post-pandemic, young people are, like the rest of us, experiencing quite an upheaval and they are coming on the bus and they're accessing services in greater numbers than ever before.

?Our youth come to the bus for many reasons. Sometimes it's healthcare. We recently saw a young woman who is a new immigrant who hadn't seen a physician in almost a decade and through MOBYSS she was able to get her first medical appointment in 10 years. We have had individuals get on the bus because they were in an unsafe living situation and our MOBYSS team helped to guide them to better, safer living circumstances. We have youth who get on the bus because they are experiencing loneliness or suicidal thoughts, experiencing depression, or increased substance abuse that is affecting their family relationships, their peer relationships and potentially also their schoolwork. Kids get on the bus for more reasons than you could possibly imagine.?

Over the course of the Mental Health in Motion fundraiser, $118,646 of the $174,000 and counting was raised through individual

and team fundraising with more than $55,000 coming through sponsorships, silent auctions and registration fees.

Individually, top fundraisers were Team Jake with $22,250, Judy Brunton with $15,937, Giancarlo Trimarchi with $9,475, and Susan Mendes de Franca with $9,160.

18 corporate sponsors, with several more who made in-kind donations, helped make the event possible, including presenting sponsor Staples Canada.

?We were so pleased to be back in person after two years,? said Ms. Matzig. ?The excitement and the enthusiasm of the participants on the day of the event was palpable. The energy in the room was so very positive in support of mental health and we just want to thank everyone in our community who participated as someone who ran, walked, or rode, who made a donation, who volunteered or sponsored, or provided any goods or in-kind services. We are so grateful for the generosity of our community.

?Our website remains open to anyone who would like to make a donation.?

To make a last-minute donation to the CMHA-YRSS' Mental Health in Motion campaign, visit CMHAinmotion.ca through July 1. To donate to the CMHA-YRSS' overall programs and endeavours, visit CMHA-YR.on.ca.

The Canadian Mental Health Association was founded in 1918 and in the intervening years has become the most extensive community mental health organization in the country.

The CMHA-YRSS is one of the fastest growing branches of the group Canada-wide and last year served more than 170,000 clients through more than 30 mental health and addictions programs for youth, adults, family caregivers, local businesses and community organizations.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter