

More than 300 get moving to support youth mental health



Youth mental health in York Region and South Simcoe got a significant boost this month as hundreds laced up and took part in the Canadian Mental Health Association's annual Mental Health in Motion.

The signature event for the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe (CMHA-YRSS) took place June 9 and was a tremendous success, with fundraising pledges and donations still rolling in. At press time, fundraising totals had topped \$67,000.

Based in Newmarket, the event saw participants fan out throughout York Region on various cycling routes, or through area neighbourhoods on foot, all to support mental health programs for youth, particularly their MOBYSS bus which takes mental health supports on the road to places where kids and youth need it the most.

"This year we had some outstanding support," says Catherine Matzig, Senior Director of Philanthropy at CMHA-YRSS. "We had some wonderful new cycling routes which were actually designed by a road cyclist, so we were able to take someone who really knows the area and knows cycling and used their expertise to design some great routes for the cycling. The walk, we were very pleased that the neighbouring community allowed us to be part of that and to do those routes in their neighbourhoods. We had some great sponsorship support, so special thanks to Staples as our presenting sponsor and a number of really great sponsors from the community both in-kind and financial sponsors.

"It really was a community event and a community celebration for those who support mental health for youth. Just a big thank you to everyone who supported this event and everyone who made a donation to make this annual event a roaring success."

With a significant uptake in 2024, Matzig says people took part for a variety of reasons, whether as individuals, as a family, or as a team. Some did it in support of a loved one who might be struggling, or has struggled in the past, with their mental health. Some participants also took part to honour someone who is no longer with them.

"It was really a day where people come out who recognize that supporting youth mental health really supports an entire generation young people through maybe some of the most difficult times in their lives and people do it, again, for a variety of personal reasons," she says. "It's a way for people to give back to the community, to give back to the CMHA, if they or a loved one has received support through our 30-plus programs and services, or who just really recognize the importance of having quality, free, and readily-accessible support for the young people in our community who are struggling with their mental health."

Youth mental health, says Matzig, is a very important issue both at the community and the national level, with rates of anxiety and

depression on the rise within the younger demographic. This, in turn, has led to the challenge of ?substance misuse.?

?We really need to be there to ensure kids who need help have immediate access, free when they need it the most, and this event helps us ensure ? and donations help us ensure we can keep MOBYSS on the road so it can continue to bring services to where kids are, but also virtually. We're really committed to providing access and the right services at the right time. MOBYSS literally saves lives and by supporting this event or supporting someone who participated in this event, or just made a donation to the CMHA York and South Simcoe generally, really does save lives. It goes towards supporting those kids who are reaching out to us when they think they have nowhere else to turn.?

For more information on Mental Health in Motion, or to get your contribution in, visit www.cmhainmotion.ca.

By Brock Weir