

Ride 4 Styles raises five figures in memory of fallen officer



By Jake Courtepatte

For the second straight year, a cold and rainy day failed to drown the spirits of the participants in the annual Ride for Styles. Over one hundred cyclists took to the streets and highways of Stouffville for the seventh year to commemorate the life of Constable Garrett Styles, sponsored by the York Regional Police (YRP) among dozens of local businesses.

"Seeing this many people out here on a day like today is a testament to who he was as a person," said chief organizer, YRP Detective Ken Bardai. "It's wonderful to see the impact he is still making as a person today."

The event raised around \$18,000 this year for the Canadian Tire JumpStart program, Victim Services of York Region, and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, a non-profit that supports social development programs in Asia and Africa.

A donation was also made to the Canadian Police Memorial Ride to Remember.

With the motto "heroes in life, not death," the Ride to Remember will take place in September to remember those like Styles who have fallen in the line of duty.

Deputy Chief Thomas Carrique acknowledged JumpStart's annual \$10,000 donation to the Ride to Remember, and was pleased his force could return the favour with a \$5,000 cheque to the program thanks to the June 4 Ride.

"It's so nice we're able to give back to JumpStart, and know that so many young people in our community will get a chance to play sports when they otherwise wouldn't."

Since its inception, the Ride 4 Styles has raised over \$100,000 for charity.

"The success of the ride for Styles every year can be attributed to everyone involved, from the riders, to the volunteers, to the community members that get involved," said Bardai. "It is more than just an event for the police force, but for the whole community to come together and remember a great man while raising funds for some great causes."

With humble beginnings in October of 2011 as a group of eight YRP cyclists, this year's event featured both a 45km and 70km ride starting from Bruce's Mill Conservation Area in Stouffville.

Carrique called the event "a celebration of Garrett's life," and hopes the event can raise "hundreds of thousands more for years to come."

Styles, a seven-year veteran with the force, was struck down by a minivan being driven by an underage driver in the early hours of the morning on June 28, 2011.