

Caledon Townhall Players to perform Argall play 'South of Hope' in his memory

By Zachary Roman

When life steals your dreams, you just have to dream harder.

That's the message of *South of Hope*, a play written by Tom Argall, a deeply-loved member of the Caledon Townhall Players family. Argall passed away suddenly on April 28 of this year at the age of 55 after suffering cardiac arrest.

The Townhall Players will be performing *South of Hope* in his memory three times: on September 9 at 8:15 p.m. and September 10 at 2:15 and 8:15 p.m. The entirety of the proceeds of tickets sold to the performances will be donated to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Tickets will be available at the door, by donation prior to the shows, which will all take place at the Old Caledon Township Hall in Caledon Village.

The Townhall Players have received a few sponsorships to cover the cost of marketing and programs for the play, so that all the money from ticket sales can go to charity.

Kim Blacklock, who is directing *South of Hope*, explained it will be the first time the Caledon Townhall Players perform the play, which was published in 2012.

She described it as a dramedy, and the play centers around a wheelchair-bound hockey player, blind photographer and an amputee factory worker who meet for group therapy sessions.

'They're brought together in a trauma group to try and work through everything? we get to watch them from day one, shortly after all their accidents? to about a year and a half later,' said Blacklock. 'I love this play. In my opinion, it's the best thing Tom wrote.'

Over the years, Argall wrote at least 10 plays, while also co-writing other plays and writing novels.

Blacklock said Argall had a knack for making humour important, while not 'hitting you over the head' with it.

One of the main themes in *South of Hope* is 'laugh or cry'; how everyone deals with their emotions differently as they work through tough parts of their lives.

'Everybody in the cast and crew knew Tom, a lot of us have known him a long time,' said Blacklock. 'It's sad that it's happening here finally after he's gone, but I'm just thrilled the stage is finally getting it.'

Blacklock said it's been an emotional experience getting the play ready for performance, and sometimes after rehearsals it takes her a few minutes in her car to compose herself before she drives home.

Raising money for the Heart and Stroke Foundation is important to Blacklock not only because of Argall, but because of her husband too, who has survived three heart attacks.

'With us losing Tom as suddenly as we did, it reinforces that every day is precious,' said Blacklock. 'We don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.'