

Fines Ford helps Heroes Are Human tour with vehicles

A tour is currently making its way around Canada, aimed at raising awareness of the stresses experienced by people who deal with emergencies.

The Heroes Are Human cross-Canada PTSD-awareness tour started last Monday in St. John's Newfoundland, and it will make its way to 48 towns and cities in the coming months. Locally, stops are planned for Brampton July 4 and Aurora July 7. And the effort is being aided by Bob Fines of Fines Ford Lincoln of Bolton, which has supplied two vehicles for the tour.

"Bob's been a tremendous supporter of the charity for years," commented Heroes Are Human founder and Executive Director Vince Savoia. "He's obviously gone above and beyond to help us out."

As well, Signs Solutions in Bolton supplied the decals for the vehicles.

The tour is a grass-roots initiative of the Toronto-based Heroes Are Human & The Tema Conter Memorial Trust. It was launched in response to numerous suicides and reports of work-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among public safety, correctional and military organizations.

Tema Conter, 25, was brutally murdered in Toronto in January 1988 by a convicted serial killer who had spent most of his adolescent and adult life in jail.

"Why is a broken leg considered a viable injury, but when something goes wrong in our brain, it's questioned?" observed Savoia.

"We want to reduce the stigma of mental illness and psychological trauma."

"The men and women of Canada's public safety, military and correctional organizations witness human suffering up close, and it sometimes becomes very difficult to cope with the aftermath," he added. "There is light at the end of that dark tunnel. There is help available, and we want to make sure these men and women, and their families, know where to find it."

Savoia was a paramedic who attended to the murder scene the day Ms. Conter died. He founded the memorial trust after dealing with PTSD, which included flashbacks, nightmares, isolation and hyper vigilance.

Each stop on the tour will include a two-hour educational event. They will be open to the public and anyone who's interested in learning more about operational stress injuries. Frontline correctional, emergency services and military personnel, as well as mental health professionals, nurses, doctors and human resource professionals, are encouraged to attend.

"This is my way of giving back to the career I loved, but can no longer do," Savoia commented.

"We hope those who join us for these sessions will leave feeling hopeful, motivated and inspired," Savoia said.



Heroes Are Human founder and executive Director Vince Savoia (third from left) was joined by various supporters recently at Fines Ford Lincoln, including advisor and former police officer Gary Wiles, media and public relations advisor Erin Alvarez, paramedic Rick Trombley, Natalie Ritacca, Fines Ford General Manager Carlos Martins, Michael Quinn of Signs Solutions, Paul Januszewski, paramedic volunteer Paula Trombley and tour logistics coordinator Derrick Allday. Photo by Bill Rea