

Local resident hoping to make a difference through 'Jason's Quest'

Written By KIRA WRONSKA DORWARD

Jason's Quest isn't really about a colouring book or sports. It's about helping ourselves and everyone in our community's lives to promote understanding, helpful coping mechanisms, and dealing with mental health and mental health challenges.

It's a subject that becomes more prevalent as we continue to face increasing challenges, over-work, and demands. When our patience is especially shot, working to further understand and learn to accommodate everyone's individual and special needs and open communication about this issue actually helps us all.

We all know we do things to get through the day and cope with demands. Some strategies work better for others. Something many people who have not seen it firsthand may not be aware of is that simple colouring is one of the most effective mechanisms to help those who might be struggling with mental health in an increasingly demanding society. Picking up a colouring book while waiting in a waiting room at the hospital enables those of different intellectual and emotional needs find common ground. Not just colouring, but letting colouring and open dialogue lead to teamwork, socialization, and relationship-building. Another very helpful outlet is sports where everyone performs their role to the best of their ability and comes together as a community for mutual support.

In this way, Jason Scorch, Vice-President of Jason's Quest Foundation, is working to help promote understanding of this in our community. Scorch is a very active member of the Bolton community that on many days can be found around town. Growing up elsewhere in a rougher town, Scorch was diagnosed with learning disabilities at a very young age. His parents involved him in Special Olympics to help him cope, communicate, and find new learning strategies for the shy boy who loves to be with others. Being involved with Special Olympics helped Scorch come out of his shell.

After finding out how much this helped him, Scorch wants to give the same gift to others. After five years of being in Special Olympics, Scorch wanted to help parents get other kids into the program So with help from his friends he helped launch Jason's Quest. He enlisted the help of President and illustrator Chris Tampen, who is currently in the hospital recovering from bypass surgery.

With the holidays coming up, Scorch especially needs 'people to help right now. It's almost Christmas time, so if people could order copies, that would [be] really help[ful].' Scorch is looking for a Bolton business to buy a hundred copies to donate to a hospital, and you can contact him separately via social media for individual requests. Books are also available at Forster's Book Garden. 'When you donate,' said Scorch, 'you get something back.'

Many families struggle with affording these types of programs and helping their children get to events, and many adults struggle to get through the holidays. By supporting others and trying to remain open and kind, we all help each other.

Research has shown that colouring can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and distress in patients who have mental health issues,' comments Faiza Khalid-Khan, Director of Mental Health and Addictions, William Osler Health System. 'The repetitiveness, patterning and detail in colouring activities prompt a positive neurological response which calms the mind and focuses it on the moment, which triggers a therapeutic response.'

'I get asked all the time,' adds Scorch, 'when the second book is coming out.' For now, Scorch would like to host a big event in the late winter or early spring. 'It's going to be something that Caledon members can come to, have dinner, and bring some big talent.' There are going to be bands, and there is already a song on iTunes you can download called 'Give One Chance' that was played at the last Midnight Madness.

Scorch puts things perfectly with, 'I got sick a long time ago. You know how hard it is when you try to find yourself again. You lose your winning streak and you have to find your way back again. A lot of athletes are [naturally] shy, now I go talk to them. I [also]

really want to thank the Caledon Committee for helping [with] the Special Olympics?We're trying to get the word out about different kinds of disabilities,? some of which are not always that obvious.

For more information, please visit the website at caledon.specialolympicsontari.ca, or email Scorch at Jason.scorch@hotmail.com.
?When I went to high-school, I found out about disabilities and how to help out. I want to tell people how they can help. For now, Scorch proudly shows me his medals and tells me about his stories meeting people all over the world for sports.