

Men will walk in women's shoes to combat violence

By Bill Rea

A group of men are hoping to get some of their fellow males to walk a bit in women's shoes this Saturday (June 20).

Representatives of MENTors appeared before Caledon council Tuesday, seeking support for the event they have planned at Hogey's Sports Bar on Alder Street in Orangeville from 9 a.m. to noon.

Travis Greeley of MENTors said they are a group of men who have been working with Family Transition Place (FTP) for about three years to help combat violence against women and girls.

He said 51 per cent of Canadian women will experience some form of physical or sexual violence during their lives.

Looking at the local situation, Greeley said FTP provided shelter to 115 women and 15 children in 2014, and that was up from the previous year's numbers. There was also an increase in the number of women receiving counselling from the agency.

"We believe it's a community issue," he said. "Our voice needs to be heard."

Saturday's event will be their second annual walk and breakfast, according to Steve Bunyan.

He said it will include men being asked to walk a symbolic 100 metres in women's high-heel shoes, although he added they won't be forced to do it. It will be followed by breakfast. He added they will be asked to take the White Ribbon Pledge to never condone, commit or remain silent about violence against women and girls. Bunyan also said women are invited, and encouraged to bring their partners and sons.

Councillor Annette Groves said she's been executive director of a women's shelter, and saw business grow to the point that they had to turn people away.

"That is a very sad, sad reality," she remarked, as she congratulated the MENTors on stepping up.

"It's a subject that's very near and dear to my heart," commented Councillor Barb Shaughnessy. "You don't know who's been affected by this."

Councillor Doug Beffort said he's seen the group grow and he appreciated the need for more people to know about what they're trying to do.

"My only hope is you run out of my size of shoe before I get there," he joked.

"You hit it square on the head when you said this is a community issue," Councillor Rob Mezzapelli commented.