

Not one more

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Perhaps you remember the heartbreak of mother Jennifer Neville-Lake as she shared the gut-wrenching agony of losing her three children, and her father, to convicted impaired driver Marco Muzzo? Since that fateful day in September of 2015, 'Not One More' has become a rallying cry in the prevention of impaired driving. It's a request that not one more person would suffer the horrific consequences of losing a family member (let alone four) to an impaired driver. Yet here we are, just a few short years later, ironically as Mr. Muzzo is now allowed out of prison on day parole, facing the sad reality that another family is left grieving. The irreparable totality of the loss of three more innocent children; along with their mother, to another alleged impaired driver, has devastated a father, their family and friends, and our Caledon community. What will it take for us to experience not one more loss of life at the hands of an impaired driver?

It's long past the time when our laws need to be changed. I reviewed the Criminal Code and potential penalties and while they can be stiff, often they are not. Enforcement alone can only accomplish so much. Sentencing is what needs to be harsher and as for paroles? We need to be thinking long and hard before allowing parole for convicted killers who often serve such a small amount of their actual sentences. Just this week, after the Ciasullo tragedy, a 27 year old convicted impaired driver (who killed a cyclist and is prevented from driving) was found impaired behind the wheel of a car! In Caledon, OPP stopped at least three vehicles over the last several days, finding all three drivers impaired, including one found 'slumped over the wheel in a live lane of traffic!?' Good God People!! What is it going to take to scare people sober because apparently the cumulative loss of six innocent children (plus countless others) over these last four and a half years hasn't been enough?

Perhaps you saw the valiant efforts of Mr. Sandeep Singh as he attempted to stop the driver of a blue infinity from leaving the scene after hitting concrete planters in an incident that occurred just two days prior to the collision that wiped out four beautiful members of the Ciasullo family. It's alleged to be the same driver and vehicle in both instances and in the dashcam video of the first incident he appears to be impaired. It also appears that on both occasions the police attempted to stop him. If only. Now it's up to the criminal justice system to stop him but will it work? I feel like it's a justice system that lays waste to the actual concept of justice, trivializing (in both sentencing and parole) the overwhelming and life-altering impact of the consequences of impaired driving. Something must be done.

Sentencing must reflect the truly devastating impact of this crime. Impaired driving is a form of premeditated murder. Getting behind the wheel of the car, while impaired, involves a conscious decision to 'take a chance' not that you won't kill someone but that you will. Knowingly and without concern, you place others in harm's way. If you commit this crime you better damn well serve some serious jail time. Period. Our justice system must change to ensure that those who commit vehicular murder actually end up in jail, stay in jail and NEVER drive again. Jennifer Neville-Lake hoped 'not one more' victim would lose their life in order for serious change to happen. Instead, we now add to the grim total of victims with the loss of a mother and her three precious babies, allegedly at the hands of an impaired 20 year old who had two days to think over the consequences of his actions between hitting a planter on a Tuesday night and killing four people on a Thursday afternoon.

To the Ciasullo family, please know that an entire community mourns with you. Know that none of us can ever truly understand the finality of your loss, and in fact I think our brains prevent us from imagining the pain you must be experiencing because it knows it is unbearable. Know that there are many of us questioning why we are not naming the alleged killer of your wife and children but can only hope that it is somehow linked to being able to bring him to justice.

Enough is enough. Make the punishment fit the crime. Zero tolerance for those who choose to drive impaired can only be supported through court action that upholds this concept. Mr. Ciasullo (and extended family and friends) face a life sentence. A lifetime of missed opportunities, birthdays, anniversaries and special occasions; a lifetime of never knowing the potential of his three beautiful girls and what they may have given to this world. The driver of the car should also face a life sentence. It's really that simple. Please, please, please - not one more. What will it take for that to become a reality?

I extend my sincerest and most heartfelt condolences to the Ciasullo family on the loss of these precious lives. Karolina, Klara, Lilianna and Mila ? your loss will never be forgotten.