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Ontario makes history with participation in Global Torch Run

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Ontario made history this past Saturday, September 19th.

Director of the Ontario Law Enforcement Torch Run, Karen Richards took to Twitter and YouTube, to announce the historic day.

?Today (Saturday), is Ontario's first ever, Global Virtual Torch Run. As guardians of the flame, members of law enforcement and our volunteers and supporters, we spend countless hours raising awareness and funds for Special Olympics,? Richards pronounced.

Richards, virtually high-fived supporters in the video and thanked everyone's efforts for ?keeping the flame alive, during the pandemic.?

Friends and family were encouraged to either walk, jog or run in support of Special Olympics Ontario this year.

?It was pretty amazing the feedback we got from our police services and all of our other law enforcement partners within the province,? said Law Enforcement Torch Run Manager, Brock Robinson.

?The community special olympics side came out to support as well. Saw a lot of great photos of athletes with their families out doing the torch run in their torch run shirts. That's why you do it.?

Patrons, were also encouraged to donate to the cause. The goal is to raise $33,000 to celebrate 33 years of being one of the largest supporters for Special Olympics.

Many members of law enforcement, correctional officers, and border police fit the bill. Locally, South Simcoe Police, York Regional Police and even Deputy Chief Marc Andrews of Peel Regional Police all shared their support via Twitter on the weekend.

Andrews, shared a photo of his smart watch, that displayed his kilometres ran (6.67), calories burnt (467) and time of completion (89:05).

In total, 292 people participated and $34,105.33 was raised in support of Special Olympics, exceeding the intended target.

?It (money) goes into the communities. What we do is we offer anybody who donated, allocate that to their local Special Olympics community, which then they fundraise and they did a pretty good job getting the word out. That helps them with facility rentals, equipment needs, uniform needs at this time,? Robinson said.

?There is a return to program process that our communities are currently going through right now and that will help them get back to regular weekly programming on a grass roots level.?

The Early Bird Highest Individual Fundraiser as of August 31st, is Barbara King. She takes home the YETI Tumbler prize.

The Overall Highest Team Fundraiser award went to Windsor Police Auxillary Service and they will receive a $100 Tim Hortons gift card.

The overall highest individual fundraiser as of Sept. 19, is Claude Dupre, who takes home an Xbox One. Dupre donated $4,021.

For an event that normally runs midway through the summer, Robinson says it was particularly challenging raising awareness of the cause digitally.

These runs normally happen between June, July and August physically. But, with COVID-19 still in effect, it was incumbent of the Law Enforcement Torch Run of Ontario to remain in connection with Special Olympics Ontario and ultimately, reported a success weekend.