

Road safety group expands advocacy beyond Caledon after weekend protest

By **Riley Murphy**

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The Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group (CCRSA) held a protest this past weekend to advocate for road safety.

The protest spanned five separate locations across Caledon, with more than 50 people participating.

Each location had a lead, and signs were delivered the day before to ensure every location was visible.

Amanda Corbett and Carmela Anzelmo-Palkowski from CCRSA shared the community's support was "overwhelming."

"We were really impressed by all the people honking out there, even if they couldn't come out for the protest and spare an hour out of their day, if they were driving by, they were honking that horn, and we really appreciated hearing all that support," said Corbett.

My Tea Bar in Bolton even reached out to the CCRSA to support by providing drinks for the day.

Some residents showed up with personal pictures and signs featuring loved ones they had lost due to road safety issues, the two explained.

"We weren't expecting that, and this is part of what we're advocating for. We can't even go for a bike ride in our neighbourhood without being hit by a truck," shared Anzelmo-Palkowski, reflecting on a story that was shared.

The CCRSA said the reach they were able to gain with this protest was also unexpected, with members who hadn't yet heard of them participating, as well as members from outside of the Caledon community.

"We got people responding to us saying that they have the same kind of issues in their neighborhoods and they want to know how they can support," said Anzelmo-Palkowski. "These protests are not just about Caledon. These protests are about changing everything across Ontario, and it looks like Quebec as well. We're getting messages across the country. It's everybody. It's across the country that these issues are pertaining to them too with road safety."

The CCRSA shared they are planning another protest, because they're "not seeing the change we want to see at that provincial level," said Corbett.

"It's likely something we're going to have to keep doing moving forward. One more protest, unfortunately, I don't think it's going to do it. I think we're going to have to keep getting out there."

They also plan to expand their messaging.

Signs at the protest advocated for safer truck licensing, stopping illegal truck yards and to "get the trucks out of the neighborhoods."

The CCRSA is also looking to move forward with information on bail reform.

They have been in contact with families across Caledon and the GTA who have lost members, if not the majority of their family, to repeat offenders on the roads.

"Especially given all of the things that have been happening, even over the summer, the crazy accidents that you're hearing, and

these people who shouldn't have even been out of jail, in my opinion, or driving around. They just get let out on bail, and they're killing people or seriously maiming them for the rest of their lives, and something needs to change there too," said Corbett.

Earlier in the summer, the CCRSA held a truck simulator at Midnight Madness, where more than 100 residents not only experienced driving around trucks, but what it's like to drive one themselves.

Now they're looking to bring the simulator all over Caledon, and hopefully into schools.

"That's really kind of the key thing is the road safety and trying to make sure that people understand that they're responsible for their own driving behavior, and a lot of people could do a lot better with their own driving behavior, and if they get a chance to see what it's like to either drive around trucks like we do here on a daily basis or drive a truck themselves, they might have a different perspective on how much space you should really leave those trucks," said Corbett. "It's not worth saving yourself a couple minutes."

Anzelmo-Palkowski said they're hoping to partner with schools as well to "get young drivers behind those wheels so we can teach them at a young age."

In the future, the CCRSA hopes to host an event where group members and the community can come together to ask questions and learn about their progress, nearly a full year after coming together.

"This is a group for everybody to join and try to make Caledon a better place," said Anzelmo-Palkowski.

To view the group, visit www.facebook.com/groups/1235698141205825.