This page was exported from - Caledon Citizen
Export date: Mon Sep 14 23:38:05 2026 / +0000 GMT

Torch Run honours slain YRP Detective and raises $35k for Special Olympics

By Jim Stewart

More than 350 registered participants ran or walked along the Tom Taylor Trail in Newmarket on Wednesday night to honour slain Detective Constable Rob Plunkett and raise funds for a great cause.

The runners, walkers, and donors combined to raise over $35,000 for a sporting organization near and dear to the spirit of DC Plunkett: The Special Olympics.

Plunkett was the Chair of the 2000 Special Olympics and coordinated the Spring Games until his passing 19 years ago. The presence of dozens of Special Olympics athletes?many of whom were prepping for the Canadian Games in Alberta?was a poignant component of the Memorial race.

The YRP has been organizing a Law Enforcement Torch run for more than 35 years and Wednesday night's event honoured a model cop who was killed in the line of duty in 2007.

The pre-race gathering at the Riverwalk Commons was a beehive of activity and the spirit of Plunkett's volunteerism permeated the setting.

York Region Deputy Police Chief Kevin McCloskey applauded the roles of a special group of volunteers who fanned out across the public square: ?We brought our 23 new recruits here, prior to their graduation at our Headquarters on Thursday night. We want to immerse them in activities they can do in their community.?

After applauding the spirit of the young recruits, McCloskey?who was decked out in his running gear and ready to race as runner 1126?described his connection to the Torch Run, Special Olympics, and Officer Plunkett.

?The Torch Run maintains Rob Plunkett's legacy. Of the fifty Special Olympians who are participating today, eleven are heading to the Canadian championships in Medicine Hat, Alberta. The funds we raise during the Torch Run and the Polar Plunge allows our Special Olympians the opportunities to travel to competitions. We're removing many of their financial burdens, including travel costs. The Torch Run also allows us to deliver Rob's passion for the Special Olympics here in York Region. We carried on his tradition by hosting the Special Olympics in 2012 and we'll be doing so in 2028, as well. I'm blessed to be the Regional Supervisor of Special Olympics and I knew Rob. To have this responsibility and honuor to carry on his role means the world to me.?

McCloskey acknowledged that events like the ?Torch Run? and the ?Horses at Heart? event he attended in King Township in late-July deepen the connectivity between the YRP and the communities it serves.

?That's where we find our joy. These events are good for our soul. Police officers experience tough moments so these events boost our spirits.?

Participants were similarly taken by the spirit of the event and took part in myriad ways?opting for either a 5K Run, a 10K Run, or a 5K Walk?all along the Tom Taylor Trail.

The trail system?named after Mayor John Taylor's father, a past Newmarket mayor himself?is a special place for Newmarket's current municipal leader and he was pleased that the event brought hundreds together to honour DC Plunkett's community-building legacy.

?He was so involved in the Special Olympics?he's an example of an outstanding YRP officer who was so involved in charitable activities. He did it with passion and he has inspired many officers to give back to their communities. Deputy Police Chief Kevin

McCloskey would be one of the many he inspired. It's the legacy of being a model York Region Police Officer.?

When asked what about the most satisfying aspect of Wednesday's event, Mayor Taylor offered a heartfelt response: ?100 per cent it was watching the athletes come in with the torch. They're excited about going to Medicine Hat. The joy in their faces. Raising $35,000 for our Special Olympians was very pleasing, too. This is also a nice setup for hosting the 2028 Special Olympics Provincials. All nine municipalities in York Region will be providing facilities for the Games. I've been attending the event for many years. It's growing and gaining numbers heading into 2028. We're so proud to be hosting.?