Riders raise Over $64,000 to support a judgment-free Lambton Kent and vital mental health programs and services

Over 500 event participants support Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton Kent's annual Ride Don't Hide

Sarnia (Ontario) June 27, 2018 – On Sunday, more than 500 cycled in the annual Ride Don't Hide event, raising an estimated $64,000 for the Canadian Mental Health Association – Lambton Kent Branch (CMHA LK).

The largest mental health bike ride in Canada, taking place in 31 communities across the country, Ride Don't Hide raises much-needed funds for a variety of community mental health programs and services, and helps to eliminate the stigma of mental illness by inviting participants to "ride in plain sight."

"Accepting, understanding and talking about mental illness can help alleviate the pain of stigma and stereotypes," says Dr. Patrick Smith, national CEO, CMHA. "In order to thrive in life, we all need to feel hope, build resilience and a strong sense of connection and belonging, which the community spirit around Ride Don't Hide really fosters.Thank you for your incredible support."

The annual ride creates a safe, open community where individuals can talk about their mental health free of judgment.

"CMHA was there for me at one of the lowest points in my life. They're such good people." Said Jeremy Mass who was taking part in his first Ride Don't Hide fundraiser on Sunday. "It is such a good organization," he said. "They fight for people who have a mental illness, who can't fight for themselves."

100% of rider raised funds from ride registration fees and rider fundraising go directly to our youth mental health programs. In Lambton Kent, proceeds from Ride Don't Hide continue to support three great initiatives: BeSafe mobile app which is meant to help children, youth and families make decisions in a crisis, SafeTalk, and New in 2017, the Mental Health Champion Award a YMCA Celebration of Youth Award. CMHA LK sponsors two YMCA Celebration of Youth Awards to recognize students whom have demonstrated leadership in mental health promotion in their community and/or school.

Ride Don't Hide started in 2010 after Michael Schratter, a Vancouver teacher who had experienced stigma while living with bipolar disorder, embarked on a 40,000 km ride around the globe for mental health.

"It occurred to me that, if approximately twenty per cent—or one in five—Canadians experienced a mental health issue in a given year, then where are those seven million Canadians?" asked Schratter. "Stigma stops when we, the twenty per cent, reveal ourselves… mental illness is so common and so varied, it is nothing but an integral part of what it is to be human."

Seven years later, many high-profile Canadians are cycling or speaking up about mental illness as Ride Don't Hide ambassadors, including Olympic rower Silken Laumann, indie rock band the

Elwins, Olympic hurdler Noelle Montcalm and 23-year-old Ryan Martin, cycling across Canada, and chronicling his experience online at www.mindcycle.ca and on Instagram @mindcycle_canada.

"It's not easy to talk about your struggles—it's nerve racking, it's the ultimate vulnerability, but it's also the most liberating and empowering thing you can do. Once you start opening up, you are slowly releasing the built-up pressure inside of you. Less pressure equals less suffering," says Martin.

Canadians can still donate to this year's Ride Don't Hide until July 31, 2018. They can do so in person at their local CMHA branch or region, or by visiting www.ridedonthide.com.

Ride Don't Hide returns next year on June 23rd, 2019. Follow @CMHANational on Facebook for more information about the event.

About Ride Don't Hide

Ride Don't Hide is the Canadian Mental Health Association's flagship fundraising campaign focused on reducing stigma and raising money for mental health. First launched with Michael Schratter's 40,000 km ride around the globe in 2010, the 7th annual Ride Don't Hide is a national event held on June 24th in 31 communities, across seven provinces, from Tofino, BC, to St. John's, NL. The Ride has raised $6 million in funding for mental health programs and services in communities across Canada. For more information, visit www.ridedonthide.com.

About the Canadian Mental Health Association

Founded in 1918, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is the most established, most extensive community mental health organization in Canada. Through a presence in more than 330 communities across every province, CMHA provides advocacy, programs and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and illnesses, support recovery and resilience, and enable all Canadians to flourish and thrive. For more information, visit www.cmha.ca

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For more information, or to arrange an interview with the Lambton Kent Ride Don't Hide site representative, please contact:

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