

# Evening of Hope for victims of cancer

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

It's often said there's strength in numbers.

That saying should ring true Sunday night as dozens of local cancer survivors and their families come together to support each other at St. Paul's United Church's Evening of Hope.

The event, which will include inspirational music and prayers, is designed for both those who've overcome cancer and others who've lost loved ones to the illness.

Organizer and St. Paul's community outreach co-ordinator Edward Bellsmith explained the evening will also fill a void in the support system cancer patients need. "There's a lot of medical support available for cancer patients, but there doesn't seem to be a lot of emotional or spiritual support for them and their families. I think there's a real need in the community."

The night will highlight the stories of cancer survivors. It will also include a candle-lighting ceremony to honour loved ones who've been affected by cancer and a talk by Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale.

Bellsmith said Mulvale lost her husband to cancer and was then diagnosed herself, but was able to overcome the illness. "She has quite a story to tell."

In addition, Wellspring and the Canadian Cancer Society will be on hand to provide information about their services and an opportunity to make a donation.

Bellsmith said the Evening of Hope is based on a similar event held at a United church in Brampton.

"It really struck a chord of response for people in that community," he said.

And so far, the feedback from local residents on the event has been equally as favourable, with Bellsmith estimating about 400 people will attend.

The Evening of Hope is open to the whole community. It will start at 7:30 p.m. at the church, located at 123 Main St. E.

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Canadian Red Cross and — each year — Milton District Hospital.

Mark said what keeps them going each year is the camaraderie the organizers share and the priority many participants make the event. It's not unusual for people scattered about the

United States and Canada to make the trip back to Milton for the event, he said.

"It's not a bad little baseball tournament," agreed Greg, 28, modestly.

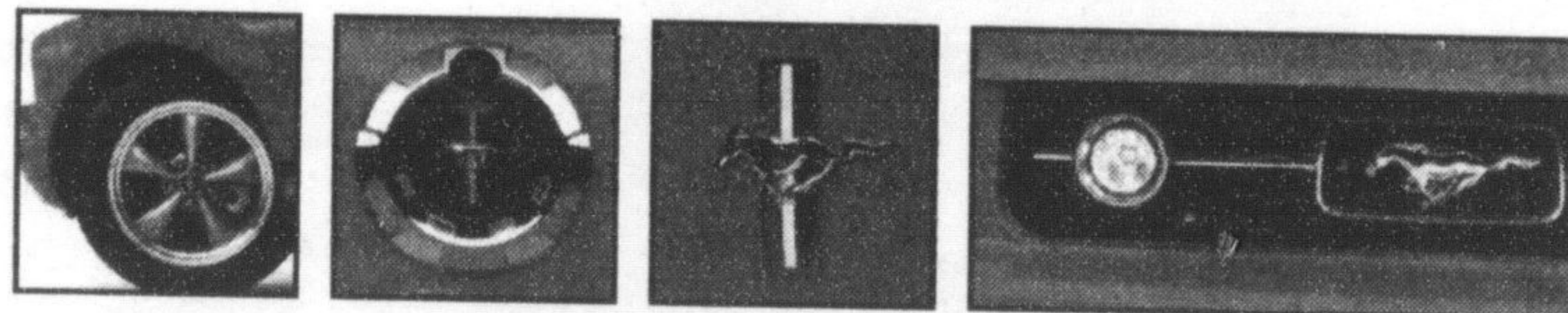
Last year's tournament drew about 500 people, and the brothers hope this year's will be even bigger.

Greg said he feels honoured to have been chosen for the award. "It's neat that I can share something with my brother. Mark and I have always been close."

For tickets, call (905) 878-0581.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at [sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

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