

Suicide prevention walk kicks off Saturday

BY ALICIA GORDON
Special

The third annual walk-a-thon in the fight against suicide takes place this Saturday at Brother Andre Catholic High School in Markham. Walk for Life, Walk for Hope was initially organized by two

Markham families who lost their sons to suicide. The Chouinard and Maher families decided to put their energy toward raising awareness and funds for other families suffering through similar tragedies. Both former students of Brother Andre, Louis Chouinard died in January 1997 at the age of 21, and Roger Maher took his

own life in February 1998. The families met through a family relative and joined together to fight teen suicide. Last year's walk gained the support of more than 400 participants across Ontario and raised approximately \$38,000 for the Canadian Mental Health Association's Youth Wellness Program.

Proceeds from this year's walk will once again be donated to the Youth Wellness Program, which provides suicide prevention and wellness workshops to primary and secondary students throughout York Region. Addressing issues such as stress, self-esteem, teasing, bullying, depression and other mental health problems, the workshops also teach students how to find help for themselves or friends.

This year's walk will begin at 10 a.m. with participants of all ages running, walking, rollerblading, cycling or skateboarding the 4 kilometre route.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. A \$10 fee will be waived for anyone with a pledge sheet of \$10 or more. Each participant will receive a Walk for Life T-shirt. Hotdogs and drinks will be available following the walk.

Depending on weather, organizers anticipate at least 600 participants.

As part of the fundraising, a new 1999 Radical Brandy Special Edition Soft Tail Customized Harley-Davidson will be raffled off at the end of the walk. A limited amount of tickets are available for \$20 each or three for \$50. To receive pledge sheets or raffle tickets call CMHA at (905) 898-7466 or (416) 798-8500 ext.10.

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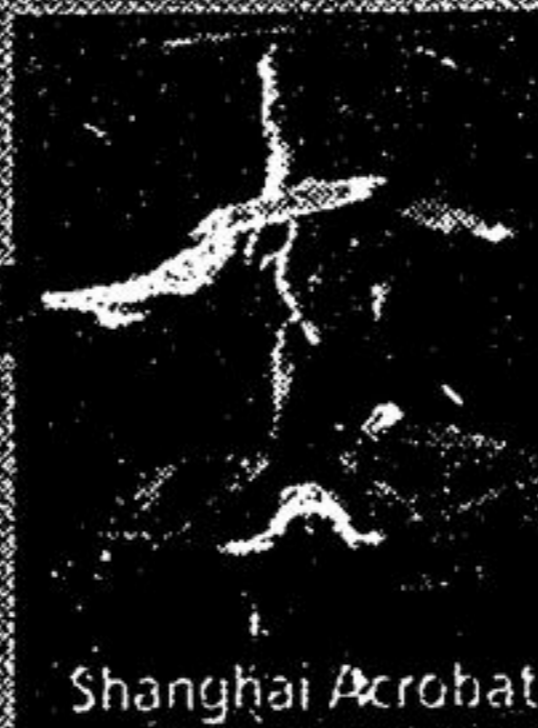
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2000/2001 SEASON

Teen males less likely to attempt suicide

Youth suicide statistics show:

- Each year an average of 94 youths commit suicide.
- Adolescent females are four to seven times more likely to attempt suicide than adolescent males. Females are more likely to attempt suicide with drugs, poison or gases, which take more time to take effect and increase opportunities for intervention.
- Males of all ages attempt suicide three to five times more often than females. Males typically use more lethal methods such as firearms or hanging.
- Studies show a significant percentage of adolescents contemplate, plan and/or attempt suicide without seeking or receiving help. Males are less likely than females to seek help from any source.
- A survey of 800 Canadian youth aged 13 to 18 found of the 19 per cent who had considered suicide, one out of five had attempted suicide. The survey also found one out of three had never told anyone of their suicidal thoughts.

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