

COMING UP: Colour Latcham Hall blue April 1

Autism marketplace has style, substance

BY STEPHANIE WEST

Latcham Hall will be transformed into a marketplace April 1 in the name of autism.

Team M&M – named for a Stouffville boy and a Richmond Hill girl with autism – is hosting the event to raise awareness and money.

Their families have fundraised since 2007 for the Walk Now for Autism Speaks Canada, a charity event out of Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto. About 7,500 walkers, including the local team, are expected at this year's event June 26.

The Stouffville Lions Club, which runs Latcham Hall, is sponsoring Team M&M and its Charity Marketplace event.

Vendors will be selling handcrafted accessories, clothing and jewelry from local artisans and designers. Featured will be the work of Kathryn Toner Designs, Passion Imports, Vesna Milovanovic and IN3CB by Paula Tobias.

Twenty per cent of sales will go to Team M&M. The event also benefits Autism Speaks Canada. Donations will also be accepted. Most vendors will accept cash or cheque.

The event will take place on April 1 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Latcham Hall, 8 Park Dr. S. Admission is free.

April is autism awareness month. One in 150 people are diagnosed with autism and it is four times more likely for boys to be affected than girls.

Autism impairs a person's ability to communicate and relate to others. There are very mild to severe symptoms. Parents are encouraged to speak to a pediatrician at first signs of autism to begin early intervention.

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On April 1, iconic structures around the world, including the Empire State Building in Manhattan and Toronto's CN Tower, will be illuminated in the colour blue to support autism awareness through the Light it up Blue campaign.

Latcham Hall will be lit in blue on the night of the marketplace event.

Local homeowners are encouraged to take part.

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