

Autism Speaks Canada set to host Walk on Wheels Car Parade next month

Written By PAULA BROWN

Autism Speaks Canada has reimagined their annual walk for 2020 with this year's event set to be a car parade.

"Inspired by the car parades that brought joy to so many during these times of social distancing, we are hitting the road to celebrate together while being safely spread apart," wrote Autism Speak Canada on their website.

The annual walk, known this year as Autism Speaks Canada Walk on Wheels Car Parade, looks to bring together the autism community, while also bringing awareness to everything the organization does. Autism Speaks Canada is a charity that was formed from the U.S based charity Autism Speaks that was founded in 2005. The charities look to promote solutions across the autism spectrum.

There are 229 teams that are taking part in the Autism Speaks Canada event, with 709 registered participants so far. As of print time Orangeville has raised almost \$3,500 of its \$20,000 goal.

"It's important to make people aware," said Andrew MacDonald, 12, who is the 2020 walk ambassador for Orangeville.

Diagnosed with autism at age 11, Andrew took part in the walk for the first time in 2019 and was asked to be the walk ambassador for the 2020 event, which he says is "pretty cool".

"Life has changed dramatically for a lot of people, but its things like autism that don't go away. You still have to make people aware," said Shauna MacDonald, mother of Andrew. "In situations such as COVID, it can be a lot more difficult for these kids to navigate that, so it's important now than ever to make people aware and ask for people to join in to spread the word."

According to Autism Speaks Canada, 1 in 66 children are currently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Autism Speaks Canada Walk on Wheels Car Parade will take place on Sept. 27 in Orangeville, with the route of the parade to be determined.

To donate or take part in the event go to www.autismspeakscanada.ca.