

BUILD-UP

Hats off to supporters

Leave it to one of the building industry's most stylish people to come up with Hats on for Awareness.

Enza Checchia, decorator for many new-home builders across the GTA and occasional guest columnist in this section, took it upon herself to shed some light on mental illness by forming this fundraiser. Joined by her co-chair, Benny Caringi, both are committed to bringing awareness in order to shatter the stigma attached to mental illness.

The Hats on for Awareness committee recently held a kick-off bash at Next Door Lounge, located in Woodbridge. Guests were introduced to "the promise" that has taken Checchia 20 years to fulfill: the promise made in memory of her beloved father, Giovanni Tiberi, who lost a silent battle to depression, leaving the family in grief and turmoil.

"Our journey to raise awareness began that evening literally, as discussions of the most heartfelt of experiences could be heard amongst the crowd," Checchia says proudly.

Caringi adds, "We were thrilled to see everyone having a great time and helping us with our mission, and from the feedback we received, we'll be having a second kick-off bash before our main event!"

The new-home industry is feeling the effects of the worldwide economic downturn in their pockets but not in their hearts: over 250 people GTA builders, manufacturers, suppliers and other building professionals came out for Hats on for Awareness, in support of CAMH (the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health).

Research shows that one in five people in Canada will be affected by some form of mental illness or addiction in their lifetime. Most people will not seek out proper treatment due to shame or simply a lack of knowledge. They may brush off their symptoms as insignificant or attribute them to something else.

The Hats on for Awareness committee wants the public to know that mental ill-



Co-chairs Enza Checchia and Benny Caringi (far left, far right) with guests at Hats on for Awareness: Larry Brydon, Mira Tomlenovic, Jamie Bratslavsky, Laurie Gordon.



The *Toronto Sun's* Hanne Flake is flanked by Rob Nicolucci and Nino Francavilla.

ness is very real and very present. The good news is that there are now a variety of treatment options, from medications to cognitive-behavioral therapy. Having a mental illness is not a sign of weakness or madness. CAMH works to transform lives for thousands of Canadian patients in an environment that conveys understanding and compassion, not confinement.

For more information on this vital cause, contact Hats on for Awareness at 905-264-7264 or email the co-chairs: Enza Checchia at enza@decorenza.com or Benny Caringi at benny@sunbriedrapery.com.

Selling homes to build a home

Some real estate agents truly put people at home.

Independent brokerage Right At Home Realty has embarked on a mission to raise the cost of building a Habitat for Humanity home for a family in need.

Since its founding in 1988, Habitat for Humanity Toronto's vision is a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. Its method is to mobilize volunteers and community partners in building affordable housing and promoting homeownership as a means to breaking the cycle of poverty.

First, the company issued a \$10,000 corporate donation. Next, its 1,200 salespeople have overwhelmingly supported the idea of a per-sale donation. The program is vol-

untary: agents can donate as much or as little as they want from each home transaction they complete. The goal is to collect \$50,000 more over the next year or so.

One hundred percent of all donations to Habitat for Humanity Toronto go toward building homes because all administrative and fundraising costs are paid for by the operation of Habitat's three ReStores, which sell donated, quality new and gently used renovation materials.

Says Arthur Bartram, president of Right At Home Realty, "As a company whose industry revolves around homes, we support the important work this organization has done in the past and look forward to being an important contributor to building homes in the future."

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