Ride Don't Hide Raises a Record $1.329 Million for Mental Health Programs

A record number of riders of all ages expected to take part in Canada's largest community bike ride to banish the stigma around mental illness – and have a great time

Photo caption: 6,000 Ride Don't Hide 2016 cyclists registered to take part in Canada's largest community bike ride for mental health.

(Vancouver, BC) – Nearly 6,000 riders are registered to take part in the **Ride Don't Hide** charity bike ride today, raising a record $1,329,874 million for **Canadian Mental Health Association's (CMHA)** mental health programs and services. As many riders register on the day of the ride, organizers believe this year's ride will attract a record number of riders as well as donations.

Celebrating its fifth anniversary, Ride Don't Hide is taking place in 29 communities throughout the country, making it Canada's largest community bike ride for mental health. All funds raised through the events go toward CMHA's mental health programs within the local communities.

BC provincial title sponsor Shoppers Drug Mart has been a key driving force for the event, raising $500,000 for mental health programs for women and their families. This four year partnership has been critical to strengthening the voice and momentum of the Ride Don't Hide movement across Canada.

"It is so inspiring to see Canadians coming out in the thousands to support mental health in their communities," said Dr. Patrick Smith, national CEO of CMHA. "Through our national and provincial sponsors and donors we have already raised more than $1 million to support the work of CMHA in large urban and rural communities across Canada."

Ride Don't Hide ambassadors and dignitaries, including five-time Canadian cycling champion Mark Walters, and ex-NHL players Shawn Antoski, Clint Malarchuk, and Geoff Courtnall, championed their local rides – many bringing their own personal mental health story to the event.

For national ambassador and ride founder Michael Schratter, the groundswell of support for Ride Don't Hide has been a dream come true.

"Ride Don't Hide for me has always been about empowering others to come out of the dark," says Michael, Ride Don't Hide national ambassador. "Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined Ride Don't Hide would be what it is today. To see thousands of people come out and ride, and show each other there's nothing to be ashamed of, that's what Ride Don't Hide is all about."

In any given year, one in five, or approximately seven million Canadians, experience a mental health problem or illness, but only one-third will seek help – often due to the discrimination and stigma around mental illness.

The tremendous growth of Ride Don't Hide in just five years – from 560 riders in two BC events in 2012 to thousands across five provinces this year – demonstrates an appetite for change. And that change is happening.

Any communities and organizations interested in hosting Ride Don't Hide events in their region next year should contact Megan Brown at megan.brown@cmha.bc.ca.

CMHA is still accepting donations online at www.ridedonthide.com.

About Ride Don't Hide
The Ride Don't Hide movement began with Michael Schratter, a Canadian teacher living with bipolar disorder. In 2010-11, Michael cycled 40,000 km around the world to share his story and empower others to help break the stigma around mental illness, as he said, "one pedal at a time." His historic journey touched people all over the world, and has become a national movement that is both raising funds for mental health programs and breaking the stigma around mental illness through annual Ride Don't Hide community events in support of the Canadian Mental Health Association. The Ride Don't Hide program is led nationally by CMHA BC.

About the Canadian Mental Health Association
Founded in 1918, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is a national charity that helps maintain and improve mental health for all Canadians. As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA helps people access the community resources they need to build resilience and support recovery from mental illness. Visit the CMHA website at www.cmha.ca today.

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For more photos of Sunday's Ride Don't Hide and interviews with CMHA and local residents with personal mental health stories, please contact:

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Ride Don't Hide Across Canada:

BC

Kamloops	Greater Vancouver	Mid-Island- Nanaimo
Port Alberni	Prince George	Shuswap Revelstoke
South Okanagan Similkameen	Vernon	Victoria

ON

Brant Haldimand-Norfolk	Cochrane-Timiskaming	Greater Toronto
Grey Bruce	Halton	Hamilton

Kenora	Lambton Kent	Middlesex
Niagara	Oxford County	Peel Region-Caledon Hills
Peterborough	Sault Ste. Marie	Sudbury/Manitoulin
Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin	Windsor	

AB

Calgary

SK

Regina

MB

Winnipeg