

Run for military families nets \$32K

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Members of Petawawa's military family community had 32,000 reasons to smile a little brighter on Saturday afternoon – all of it in dollars.

This was the result of efforts from Commissionaires Ottawa, who, in their first- ever 'Run for Military Families' raised \$32,000 to help the Petawawa Military Family Resource Centre with its programs. Theresa Sabourin, PMFRC executive director, said she was overwhelmed by this outcome, and thanked everyone involved for their generosity and dedication.

"This is astonishing," she said, noting the program had been running a deficit up to this point, and staff was becoming concerned about how to deal with it.

"But now, oh my gosh, we are there!" Ms. Sabourin said.

The Run for Military Families saw 20 commissionaires joined by 20 soldiers from CFB Petawawa for a 200-kilometre marathon run between Ottawa and CFB Petawawa. Starting out from Parliament Hill on Friday, the group made their way to the finish line at Dundonald Hall by the scenic route, passing through many Ottawa Valley communities along the way.

Commissionaires Ottawa is a not-for-profit security services provider, whose personnel consist of former military and RCMP officers. This event was the first time the commissionaires and CFB Petawawa came together in an event which assists military families, and organizers have stated there will likely be another one next year.

During a short ceremony held after the marathon ended, Paul A. Guindon, CEO of Commissionaires Ottawa, lead sponsor and organizer of the run, said the idea was the brainchild of Inspector Moe St-Louis, a retired Chief Warrant Officer and commissionaire.

His daughter Christine is a member of the OPP and her husband Sgt. Chesley Reid serves with 2 RCHA. Moe's son Patrick ran with his father during the marathon, with Christine and her family joining them on Saturday. Mr. Guindon said what they hoped to accomplish with the run is to raise both money and awareness of the PMFRC, and so shine a light on the important contributions it makes to the welfare of Canada's military.

"When a soldier is deployed, the biggest concern is wondering whether his or her family is being looked after at home," he said.

"Our community's involvement in Run for Military Families shows our soldiers that their family members are not forgotten and that we appreciate the daily sacrifices they make on our behalf."

Mr. Guindon said this event would not have been possible without the support of volunteers, sponsors, local municipalities and police forces, the community, and the people who hit the road to take part. "I thank you for your engagement," he said, "and all you did for military families today."

"I'm proud to have been a part of it."

Lt. Col. Bill Moore, commander of CFB Petawawa, said base personnel have been very excited to be able to take part in this effort to assist the PMFRC, whose services in support of families is needed more than ever with this year's upcoming cycle of deployments.

As for the event, he said he couldn't praise it enough.

"I look forward to the second one," he said.

Petawawa mayor Bob Sweet, who met with the runners at the Petawawa Legion, where they stopped before completing their marathon, said this had been a great event.

"This was a great opportunity to recognize the importance of the PMFRC and the work they do, helping families cope with the stress of military life," he said.