

# MHI breaks Tulipathon fundraising record in midst of pandemic

BARRHAVEN – Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI)'s Virtual Tulipathon 2020 has raised a record \$53,700 for affordable housing.

The Virtual Walk – which took place on Sun., May 31 – saw supporters complete 3K solo strolls and household hikes in their home neighbourhoods while following physical distancing regulations.

This is the first year MHI has hosted Tulipathon virtually. Typically, MHI supporters gather at Commissioners Park near Dow's Lake to walk among the tulips. However, due to COVID-19, MHI supporters were unable to congregate in person, and MHI staff opted instead to transform its annual fundraiser into a virtual event.

Despite limitations imposed by the pandemic, MHI saw its most successful Tulipathon to date. As of press time, supporters had collected \$53,776. The tally surpassed the previous 2019 Tulipathon record of \$37.5K.

The success of the 2020 Tulipathon came as a pleasant surprise to organizers. MHI had set a stretch goal of \$50,000, and staff were pleasantly surprised to see the online fundraising thermometer sail past the \$50,000 mark around 11:30 p.m. on May 31. "It is one thing to be able to say that we went ahead with our Tulipathon in 2020 despite the pandemic," said Executive Director Suzanne Le. "It is another thing entirely to say we broke every record we held."

Le noted that the tally

is still expected to climb in coming weeks, as the Tulipathon collection period will continue until the end of June. "On behalf of everyone who works for MHI, a huge shoutout to all of you who made Tulipathon 2020 a raging success," said Le.

To maintain the spirit of Tulipathon, MHI requested that participants take pictures (or videos if they prefer) of their walks on May 31 and email them to communications@multifaithhousing.ca for the charity's digital photo album. Walkers with social media accounts were also encouraged to upload their pictures using the hashtag #keepcalmandtulipathon. MHI is in the process of compiling the album and will publish it soon on their website, www.multifaithhousing.ca.

"Walkers continue to submit their pictures, and we'll be publishing the album shortly," said Le. "We are so humbled and grateful for this city's support."

Every year, 100 per cent of Tulipathon proceeds go directly to subsidizing affordable housing units. MHI, a charity started in 2002, has a mission to provide and promote affordable housing in Ottawa. The organization's membership consists of 80-plus congregations from the National Capital Region, including Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim faith groups. However, MHI's base of supporters and volunteers come not only from religious backgrounds, but secular society as well.

MHI has four afford-



Barrhaven resident and MHI tenant Leïla Sieg and her son, Younes Aashour, were among the Virtual Tulipathon 2020 participants.

able housing residences in Barrhaven. Its fifth in Ottawa. MHI's largest project, Veterans' House, and newest residence – is located in the Haven – is scheduled to open in 2021.

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