

Tulipathon Walk to End Homelessness goes virtual in 2020

BARRHAVEN – Multi-faith Housing Initiative (MHI)’s Tulipathon Walk to End Homelessness has always gone ahead, rain or shine – and now organizers can say the annual fundraiser will proceed even during a pandemic.

Tulipathon – an annual 3K walkathon that normally takes place at Commissioners Park near Dow’s Lake – has been converted into a virtual event this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

On Sun., May 31 at 3 p.m., walkathon organizers are asking participants to complete a three-kilometre “solo stroll” or “household hike” in their own neighbourhoods while practicing physical distancing.

“We won’t be together in person, but we will be together in spirit on May 31,” said MHI Executive Director Suzanne Le. She added that walkers’ solo stroll/household hike doesn’t have to be exactly 3 km or start exactly at 3 pm: “As long as you get some exercise, get outside, and get some fresh air, and walk for MHI, we are delighted that you participated.”

To maintain the spirit of Tulipathon, MHI is requesting that participants take a picture or video of their walk on May 31 and email it to communications@multifaithhousing.ca for the charity’s digital photo album. Walkers with Twitter or Facebook accounts are encouraged to upload their pictures and videos using the hashtag #keepcalmandtulipathon. (MHI’s handle is @MHIottawa both on Twitter and Facebook.)

MHI, a charity started in 2002, has a mission to provide and promote affordable housing in Ottawa. The organization is unusual in the sense that its voting members are faith groups, rather than individuals. MHI typically has more than 80 congregations from the National Capital Region – including Baha’i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim faith groups – take out a membership in any given year. However,

MHI’s base of supporters and volunteers come not only from religious backgrounds, but secular society as well.

MHI has four affordable housing residences in Ottawa. MHI’s largest and newest residence – the Haven – is located in Barrhaven.

“Tulipathon is very important for MHI because 100 per cent of the money we raise goes toward providing subsidies for our tenants who are on low income,” said MHI Manager of Community Engagement and Barrhaven resident Sahada Alolo.

Last year, Tulipathon raised more than \$37,000. This year, MHI is hoping to meet or exceed that record, despite COVID-19. Organizers note that their goal is projected to increase in 2021 after MHI opens its next project – Veterans’ House, a 40-unit supportive housing facility in Rockcliffe built exclusively for veterans. (Tulipathon proceeds won’t support Vet-

erans’ House this year, as Tulipathon only supports subsidies for tenants who already live with MHI – and nobody has moved into Veterans’ House yet, as it’s still under construction.)

Alolo noted that Tulipathon fundraising doesn’t end the day of Tulipathon. “Regardless of whether you’re able to walk, you can still fundraise until the end of June,” she said.

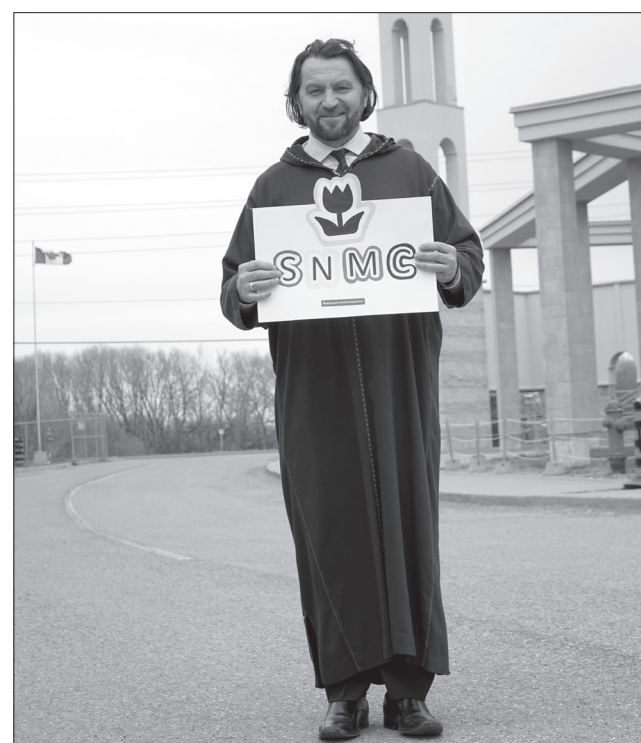
MHI is striving to help Ottawa address its affordable housing crisis. Roughly 12,000 households are on the Social Housing Registry of Ottawa’s waitlist for affordable housing. In January 2020, Ottawa City Council unanimously voted to declare a housing and homelessness state of emergency.

MHI volunteer and Haven tenant Roxanne Poulin will be doing a solo stroll at the Haven grounds on Sunday. She noted that the Haven has transformed many lives, including her own. “Everybody should have a

chance,” said Poulin. “Not everybody has a lot of money, and this gives a lot of good people a chance to live normally in nice housing.”

Imam Zijad Delić of the South Nepean Muslim Community in Barrhaven is a patron of MHI. He’s been involved with Tulipathon since the start of the walkathon. “All people are honoured in the sight of God,” said Delić. “And every person is my brother, my sister. It doesn’t matter where they come from, what kind of ethnicity they are, what kind of religious background they have. They are my brothers and sisters in humanity. And as such, I have to care about them – specifically in the moments of calamity, of distress, like the Coronavirus. It’s the policy of the believer to be kind, to be generous, to be caring, and sharing at the same time.”

To learn more about Tulipathon, visit www.multifaithhousing.ca/tulipathon.



Imam Zijad Delić of the South Nepean Muslim Community (SNMC) has supported Tulipathon since the beginning. He’s pictured here outside his congregation’s worship space in Barrhaven with SNMC’s submission for the Tulipathon Mini Banner Competition.

All about Virtual Tulipathon 2020

This year, MHI is asking that individuals do a solo stroll or household hike of three kilometres (or thereabouts) on Sun., May 31. Anyone and everyone is welcome to participate!

Giving mainly online:

This year, MHI is encouraging online donation as the preferred method to support Tulipathon. However, cheque, cash and phone donations are still accepted. More information is available at www.multifaithhousing.ca/tulipathon.

Take a picture (sign optional!):

MHI is creating a digital photo album and would love for participants to send in their photos (or videos) to communications@multifaithhousing.ca. Many walkers will be holding the official “Proudly Supporting Tulipathon 2020” poster card in their pictures – they’ve either requested an official card in the mail, or opted to print the poster off the event website at www.multifaithhousing.ca/tulipathon using a home printer. However, the sign is optional – many walkers will simply be snapping a selfie mid-walk on May 31 and emailing it in to MHI. Those with Twitter and Facebook plan to upload their photos to social media using the hashtag #keepcalmandtulipathon.

Mini Banner Contest for teams:

Every year, MHI hosts an annual banner contest at Tulipathon, where all participating teams create a banner. Judges typically select the top three teams. This year, MHI is continuing the contest despite COVID-19. They’re asking teams to create a mini banner, take a picture, and email it to [communications@multifaithhousing.ca/tulipathon](mailto:communications@multifaithhousing.ca). Judges will peruse an online photo album of the submitted banners and pick the winners.



MHI tenant and Barrhaven resident Roxanne Poulin will be completing her own independent solo stroll on Sun., May 31 in support of the Tulipathon Walk to End Homelessness.