



Kin Canada

Association of Kinsmen and Kinettes

To District 8

KIN GALA DINNER TO SUPPORT THE MILITARY FAMILIES FUND

(June 4, 2011 - Oshawa) – The Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Durham Region are holding a Gala Dinner, featuring the Portraits of Honour mural, on June 4, 2011 at the Ontario Regiment Armoury. The funds raised will support the Military Families Fund and the Toronto Military Families Resource Centre to assist families of the fallen and veterans returning to Canada.

“It’s hard to imagine the incredible emotional toll that a family faces when they learn of the loss of their loved one. All too often, this also translates into incredible financial stress,” says Bruce Lloyd, national project manager for the Portraits of Honour National Tour.

The Portraits of Honour mural honours the 154 Canadian soldiers who lost their lives serving in Afghanistan. The 10’ x 50’ mural was created by Cambridge artist and Kinsman Dave Sopha, in partnership with Kin Canada and the Kin Canada Foundation. The mural has been painted in a makeshift studio on the ground floor of the Kin Canada headquarters in Cambridge, Ont.

While the project’s main focus is Canadian Forces personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, it also pays homage to those who continue to serve, whether in combat or in fulfilling Canada’s internationally respected peacekeeping role.

“I can’t express the emotional impact of standing in front of the Portraits of Honour mural and looking at the life-size faces of these 154 fallen soldiers. It is now our turn to demonstrate our gratitude for their loyalty and service by financially assisting their families and the veterans who are back home,” said Todd Doyle, Durham Kinsmen Club President.

The Gala Dinner will be hosted by a yet-to-be-announced celebrity Master of Ceremonies and will include a Silent Auction. Tickets are \$125, seating is limited to 250 guests and tables of eight can be reserved. For tickets, contact Tony Foggetti (905)985-0032 or kintony@hotmail.com or Ajax Kinsman Robert Mackie (416-528-1550 or rmackie@cruiseshipcenters.com).

Partnership Participants : Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum, Royal Canadian Legion, Oshawa Navy Club, Pickering Kinsmen Air Cadet Squadron, Durham Regional Police, OPP, Oshawa Fire Service, City of Oshawa, Durham Region Long Term Health Facilities, Sportsnet, Don Cherry, Glen Healey, Durham District School Board, Tim Hortons, Pizza Pizza, RBC, Zone Durham Kin Clubs, St. Johns Ambulance, various community leaders and local businesses.

Contact
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Picture Captions:

1. Portraits of Honour mural that measures 50 feet wide by 10 feet tall and depicts the 154 fallen Canadian soldiers who lost their lives serving in Afghanistan.

Credit: Shannonview Photography, shannonview.ca

2. The portrait of Master Corporal Jeffery Scott Walsh, who died on Aug. 9, 2006, is shown in the foreground as artist Dave Sopha works on another fallen soldier's portrait.

Credit: Shannonview Photography, shannonview.ca

3. Artist Dave Sopha of Cambridge in front of his Portraits of Honour mural that honours the 154 Canadian soldiers who lost their lives serving in Afghanistan.

Credit: Shannonview Photography, shannonview.ca

About the Military Families Fund

The [Military Families Fund \(MFF\)](#) was created in April 2007 by General Rick Hillier, the former Chief of the Defence Staff, to assist military families faced with unforeseen and often immediate needs that have resulted due to conditions of service. It is an agile and responsive means for Base and Wing Commanders, in concert with [Military Family Resource Centres \(MFRC\)](#) across the country, to help military families within hours of being advised of need. The fund helps with short-term emergencies and also provides long-term support. The MFF allows Canadian Forces (CF) leadership to meet the special-case needs of CF members and their families with speed and flexibility not always available through more traditional programs.

About Artist Dave Sopha

Dave Sopha stared at his morning newspaper on Dec. 6, 2008. The headline screamed that Canada had lost its 99th, 100th and 101st soldier. An improvised explosive device claimed their lives. At that moment, Sopha decided to dedicate the next few years honouring every fallen soldier, sailor or aircrew through the creation of a mural.

Sopha has been airbrushing murals and paintings for the past 38 years. He discovered his artistic talent during an eight-month recovery following a car accident in 1970 that left him with a broken back.

His career as an artist began to take off after opening an art studio in Toronto and being commissioned to airbrush murals on vans and motorcycles. Ten years later Dave, along with his family, relocated to the City of Cambridge where he opened a studio to create his masterpieces.

A volunteer at heart, Dave joined the Kinsmen Club of Preston (Kin Canada) in 1983. In 1990, to celebrate Kin Canada's 70th anniversary, Dave presented the Association's founder, Hal Rogers, with a large mural portraying his life with Kin since the service organization's inception in 1920. For his support and tireless effort, Dave has been awarded a Life Membership in Kin Canada, the highest Honour conferred.

Dave has had an extensive career supporting military murals across the country in Legions and memorials, receiving numerous awards for his work. When the 'Man in Motion Tour' arrived in Cambridge, Dave was asked to paint a giant poster of Canadian Rick Hansen. Dave asked thousands of people to sign the poster in exchange for a small donation to Cystic Fibrosis Canada, Kin Canada's national cause.

Dave has been married to his wife Penny for 41 years. They have one son and three daughters, 12 grandchildren and one great grandchild.

About the Kin Clubs of Durham Region

Durham Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs promote a variety of local pride initiatives, including: fundraising for the new MRI machine at Lakeridge Health Oshawa and Cystic Fibrosis research; supporting local minor soccer, baseball and hockey leagues, the international Oshawa Minor AAA Midget/Bantam "Kinsmen Cup" and the Oshawa Kinsmen Stadium; spearheading the Christmas Hampers and Project Santa Claus campaigns for local families in need at the holidays.

For more information on our organization, visit www.oshawakinsmen.com and www.ajaxkinsmen.com.

About Kin Canada

Kin Canada is the largest all-Canadian association of community service clubs with over 500 clubs and 7,000 caring and dynamic volunteers from coast to coast. Kinsmen and Kinette members have contributed more than \$1 billion to Canadian communities since the Association was founded in 1920. Working together, members are enhancing the quality of life in their communities by promoting service, fellowship, positive values and national pride.

Since 1964, the Kinsmen and Kinettes have proudly supported the work of [Cystic Fibrosis Canada](http://www.cysticfibrosis.ca). Kin and the CFC have shared in many exciting accomplishments, including the discovery of the gene responsible for CF in 1989. Kin Canada's total contributions have surpassed \$38 million, making Kin Canada one of the largest supporters of CF research and care in Canada.

For more information about Kin Canada, visit www.kinCanada.ca

Additional Quotes

“One thing we are all afraid of is that the years go by and they get forgotten. This mural means that none of our fallen are going to be forgotten, that they are always going to be remembered through generations for the sacrifices they made,” said Bev McCraw, whose son Sgt. Shawn Eades died on August 20, 2008.

“The mural is a tribute, a memorial and a place for people to connect – not just for the fallen but the wounded soldiers, too,” stated Judy Clages whose son Petty Officer Second Class (Douglas) Craig Blake died on May 3, 2010.

“With many among the Kin family having served in the military and Kin Canada’s past war efforts on the home front, Portraits of Honour is a wonderful expression of our continued affinity for our troops and the Association’s intense national pride,” said Ric McDonald, executive director and CEO of Kin Canada.