

# THE BARRIE EXAMINER

## Walk a mile in her shoes

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Shelter fundraiser has men sporting some fancy footwear

By NICKI CRUICKSHANK - The Barrie Examiner



ian mcinroy The Barrie Examiner The Women and Children s Shelter of Barrie presents Walk a Mile in Her Shoes — part of the International Men s March to Stop, Rape, Sexual Assault and Gender Violence — on Oct. 17 at Centennial Park. Shelter community development co-ordinator Heather Croft, left, and executive director Lynda Muir, are asking area men to take the challenge. Call 728-6300, ext. 229 for details.

Hey guys.

What would it take to have you walk a mile in a woman's shoes?

How about helping to bring an end to violence against women?

The Women & Children's Shelter of Barrie wants you to be a man next weekend by slipping into some strappy sandals and joining the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event.

"It raises awareness, especially with men. If we get men involved, they'll carry forth the message against violence against women," said Lynda Muir, the shelter's executive director.

"The reality is, there are women living with violence every day, and it's often hidden. Women aren't going to walk around looking abused. They'll try to hide it."

The event, which is a shelter fundraiser, takes place Oct. 17 at Centennial Park. Teams of men are challenged to walk a mile from the Lions pavilion to Barrie Marina wearing ladies' shoes.

Opening ceremonies run from 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., and the walk starts at noon.

"It's the whole idea that gender is socially constructed. Men are to act manly, and women are (fragile)," Muir said. "Those stereotypes confine and restrain us. So, for some men, they can't think of participating in this because it isn't manly."

Heather Croft, the shelter's community development co-ordinator, said she hopes the playful aspect of this event will help break down that barrier.

"The fact that some men won't take part shows that fear of seeming less manly," she said. "We're hoping that the fun aspect of this event will make it easier for men to come out and talk about this issue."

"We'll have man-aid stations set up along the way to help those who need it," she added.

Croft said there are a number of men's teams already signed up, including Georgian College fire and rescue students.

Large-sized women's shoes will be handed out to team members, or teams can opt to bring their own.

"We've had positive feedback from teams signed up," she said. "There are some men who've gone shoe shopping in Barrie and Toronto for this, and are also dressing up. They're having fun with it."

Muir said fun aside, the men involved will see how difficult walking in ladies shoes can be, symbolizing how hard a life of abuse is on women.

"It's a serious issue," she said. "This will hopefully shed light on that. There are many women out there living with violence and we have no idea."

Pledge sheets and information are at [barrieshelter.com/events-2/walk\\_a\\_mile](http://barrieshelter.com/events-2/walk_a_mile).

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