



Amar Karma's 9th 'Give A Heart' Gala Draws New Advocates



MISSISSAUGA: Amar Karma Health and Wellness Awareness Network held their 9th annual Give A Heart Gala on Saturday, February 2 at the Versailles Convention Centre in Mississauga.

The event celebrates Valentine's Day for the best interests of the collective good, with community members gathering to witness the culmination of months of hard work by a team of dozens of dedicated volunteers and youth.

Every year, hundreds gather to celebrate Amar Karma's mandate by encouraging members of the South Asian community to change pre-existing cultural mindsets and register as organ donors, make a pledge to donate their baby's umbilical cord blood after delivery, donate hair and blood where possible, fight issues of mental health and addictions in the community, and making some simple gestures of giving from themselves to celebrate love.

This year's advocates – some of whom were as young as 4 years old – brought together a wide range of experience and

age to speak about issues close to their hearts.

Radhika Goyal and Gurwinder "Harry" Pabla spoke about the effects of addiction on families, Neelam and Sam Wadhwa launched an appeal for a directed donation of a kidney for their young son. Ria Malik and Shreya Dua raised issues of accessibility for disabled persons. Amanpreet Chonkrian promoted the need for better mental health support in the community.

Ashveen Joshan spoke about the effects of stress, Aishmit Khurana spoke about the effects of bullying, Kaaya Gill put on a short skit to promote umbilical cord donation, Aditya Goyal spoke about the need to donate blood and Gaurav Singh Marok spoke about eye donation.

The event honoured Jagveer Saroy as volunteer of the year for logging hundreds of hours as a volunteer in a number of roles, and being available to support the entire team at all times. Also honoured as volunteers were Sheela Samy, Shay Cheema, Manjot

Singh & Kiratpaul Singh for dedication to Karma. Once again this year, the Special Sixteen segment featured many would-be donors pledging to donate their organs and tissues by signing up on the occasion of their sixteenth birthday, and inspiring next year's batch of 'special sixteens'. There was

also a special auction of paintings by Elena, who donated proceeds from her sales to Amar Karma.

The gala was attended by MP Ruby Sahota, who presented Amar Karma with an official certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Canadian government, and MPP Deepak Anand, who brought along greetings from

Premier Doug Ford.

MPP Prabhmeet Sarkaria addressed the guests and applauded the campaigns run by Amar Karma. Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown also took a moment to appreciate the hard work of founder Loveen Gill and her team in their valuable contributions to the community.

Brampton City Councillor Harkirat Singh appreciated the efforts of the group. Rapper & musician Fateh Doe handed out awards and spoke about the importance of initiatives such as Amar Karma's.

The gala featured special cultural performances featuring salsa, bhangra & ballroom dancing, with family fun, raffle prizes, dinner and dancing, and set a precedent for a lasting commitment for years to come.

For more information, visit amarkarma.org

Hypothermia Can Kill: Be Alert In Extreme Cold Weather

TORONTO: Extreme Cold Weather Alerts are issued when the temperature is forecast to reach -15 degrees Celsius or colder, or when the wind chill is forecast to reach -20 or colder.

Exposure to cold weather can be harmful to your health. Hypothermia occurs when the body's core temperature drops below 35 degrees Celsius and can have severe consequences, including organ failure and death. Frostbite can also occur in cold weather when skin freezes and, in severe cases, can lead to amputation when deeper tissues freeze.

Those most at risk of cold-related illness are people experiencing homelessness or those underhoused, those who work outdoors, people with a pre-existing heart condition or respiratory illness, elderly people, infants and young children. People with heart prob-

lems can experience worsening of their condition up to several days after cold weather occurs.

Extreme Cold Weather Alerts activate local services that focus on getting and keeping vulnerable residents inside. A warming centre is open at Metro Hall in Toronto by 7 p.m. the day an alert is called, and remains open continuously until noon on the day an alert is terminated. Other municipalities in the province also offer similar facilities.

Other services include notification to community agencies to relax any service restrictions, availability of transit tokens in some drop-ins, and additional overnight street outreach.

Throughout the year, 24-hour respite sites provide meals, places to rest, and service referrals at locations across the city. People can call 311 for locations and to



connect to Central Intake for a referral. Homeless Help lists site information at <http://www.toronto.ca/homelesshelp>.

Residents must help vulnerable

people by calling 311 if there is a need for street outreach assistance. Call 911 if the situation is an emergency. During an Extreme Cold Weather Alert, members of

the public are encouraged to take the following precautions:

- Check the weather report before going outside.
- Dress in layers, making sure your outer layer is windproof, and cover exposed skin.
- Wear a hat, warm mittens or gloves, and warm boots.
- Stay dry. Your risk of hypothermia is much greater if you are wet.
- Choose wool or synthetic fabrics for your clothes instead of cotton, because cotton absorbs and holds moisture, no longer keeping the wearer warm.
- Seek shelter if you normally spend long periods outside. Depending on the wind chill, exposed skin can freeze in minutes.
- Drink warm fluids other than alcohol.
- Warm up by taking regular breaks in heated buildings when enjoying winter activities outside.
- Consider rescheduling outdoor activities, or limiting time outdoors, during colder temperatures, especially if it's windy.
- Heat your home to at least 21 degrees Celsius if infants or elderly people are present.
- Call or visit vulnerable friends, neighbours and family to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties.

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| AGE | \$250,000 Male & Female | | \$500,000 Male & Female | | \$1000,000 Male & Female | |
|---------|-------------------------|---------|-------------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 30 yrs. | \$10.04 | \$7.63 | \$14.99 | \$14.31 | \$28.80 | \$18.00 |
| 40 yrs. | \$12.79 | \$11.17 | \$19.08 | \$18.23 | \$34.02 | \$30.51 |
| 50 yrs. | \$27.74 | \$23.28 | \$48.20 | \$35.91 | \$93.96 | \$65.79 |
| 60 yrs. | \$83.03 | \$58.95 | \$157.05 | \$108.90 | \$307.35 | \$213.30 |

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