

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**23 First Responder Suicides since April Sparks “You Are Not Alone” Awareness Campaign**  
**Ontario Psychological Association and the Public Services Health & Safety Association**  
**Support Campaign Organized By Toronto Charity, ‘Heroes Are Human’**

Toronto, Ontario – The Tema Conter Memorial Trust in partnership with the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) and the Public Services Health & Safety Association (PSHSA) have launched the “You Are Not Alone” suicide awareness campaign after more than twenty first responders – including police officers, paramedics, fire fighters and correctional officers – have died by suicide since April 29<sup>th</sup> of this year.

“One suicide is too many, and this number saddens me,” said Vince Savoia, founder and executive director of the Trust whose slogan states, ‘Heroes Are Human’. “Something needs to change. People are too afraid to reach out for and ask for help.”

Savoia’s charity has been advocating for mental health and awareness of critical incident stress and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for over a decade. The Trust has grown to be a hub for research, education and training, as well as a peer and psychological support resource for the men and women serving in Canada’s emergency services, military and correctional organizations.

“The OPA is very pleased to support the “You Are Not Alone” suicide awareness campaign,” said Dr. Jane Storrie, President of the OPA. “Those who serve in public safety organizations are often witness to the worst of human suffering while they perform their duties, and it is their diligence, compassion and empathy that often makes it difficult to process what they’ve experienced. OPA members take seriously our responsibility to provide treatment and support to those who suffer emotionally and psychologically after a life-altering experience or the accumulation of months or years of performing in distressing conditions. We know it’s not easy to reach out and ask for help, but heroes are human, and deserve nothing less than our best efforts. After all, that’s what they give us every day on the job.”

“PSHSA welcomes the opportunity to support this campaign,” said PSHSA Emergency Services Unit Manager, Lynn McCaig. “PSHSA already has working relationships with police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and correctional officers and see this partnership as a strengthening of our commitment to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses while fulfilling the intent of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The individuals targeted in this campaign are those who respond to situations that others rush from and deserve the respect and support of those they seek to protect. It is paramount that the workplace parties involved work collectively to identify prevention, education and communication strategies to reduce the potential for harm to these dedicated men and women.”

Many first responders have already begun participating in the campaign by sharing photos of themselves holding signs that say, “You Are Not Alone” via social media. Anyone seeking help is encouraged to call the toll-free peer and family support hotline at 1-888-288-8036 or visit [tema.ca](http://tema.ca).

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A complete Digital Press Kit can be found [HERE](#)

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On Twitter @TemaTrust On Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HeroesAreHuman>