



WHITBY — Members of Whitby Fire and Emergency Services have joined staff from fire departments across Ontario in donning Red Epaulettes all month in support of Wounded Warriors Canada's "Slip on Your RED" Campaign.

Epaulettes are the small sashes worn on the shoulder of a first responder uniform which denote their ranking, and RED stands for Remember Everyone Deployed.



Wounded Warriors, based in Whitby, is a national charity with a mission to honour and support ill and injured Canadian Armed Forces members, veterans, first responders and their families.

"It's a new program in partnership with Wounded Warriors Canada and it's to bring awareness to mental health for first responders and for those in the military," said Whitby Fire Chief Dave Speed.

"So, for the month of November, we're going to be wearing them and taking pictures and Tweeting it out on our social media and you'll see firefighters throughout the community wearing bright red shoulder sashes."

Wounded Warriors provides a wide range of programs and services for individuals and families affected by operational stress injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Executive director Scott Maxwell said the organization is proud to call Whitby and Durham Region home. The Park of Reflection — the only park in Canada dedicated to wounded veterans and other uniformed personnel injured in service — was opened by Wounded Warriors at Cullen Central Park in fall 2014.

"It means a lot to have the support of Whitby Fire and Emergency Services," said Maxwell, who dropped by Whitby Fire headquarters on Nov. 1 to kick off the partnership.

"The Slip on Your RED campaign is a great way for our first responders to directly support our mission, while at the same time raising funds to help us help their members and their families in need."

The epaulettes have been produced and supplied by Unisync Group Carleton Uniforms. Funds raised from the sale of the epaulettes are being donated directly to Wounded Warriors in support of national mental health initiatives.

Speed said some members of Whitby Fire have accessed programs offered through Wounded Warriors and found them to be life-changing. All 141 members of the department will be taking part in the campaign, he added.

"We're exposed to many traumatic types of events that stay with us for most of our lives and in the past, these types of things haven't really been discussed or addressed properly and a lot of us are paying for that now," said Speed, explaining why they jumped at the opportunity to support the cause.

"It's certainly more and more prevalent in society that (mental health is) being addressed now, and for us it's an important factor to make sure that our firefighters are healthy and able to perform properly to help serve the community."

Read the full article here: [Whitby firefighters 'slip on red' epaulettes for Wounded Warriors campaign](#)