



Asbestos awareness

Walk for Truth in Powell River

The second annual Walk for Truth—Asbestos Kills will be held in Powell River (the number one hotspot for asbestosis in B.C.) on Saturday, June 22.

It is being organized by the Asbestos-related Research, Education & Advocacy Fund (AREA Fund), a grassroots charity started in B.C. by the Ford family after Dave Ford, an electrician, died of mesothelioma in 2008.

During his battle with this disease, the family found both the medical system and compensation systems ill-equipped to deal with his disease. After Dave's death, the family learned that asbestos-related diseases are the number one occupational killer in B.C. and right across Canada, which made them wonder why more wasn't being done to improve the situation for victims and to protect people from asbestos exposure.

Asbestos is odourless, tasteless and invisible, and sadly it was used in thousands of building products for decades, which means that it's still all around us, even if we're not aware of it. It's in our homes, our schools, our hospitals—our lives.

The family wanted to do something positive in Dave's memory and improve the situation for others, so it created a registered charitable fund in 2010 to support asbestos-related research, education and advocacy pro-

jects. Thanks to the generosity of donors, the AREA Fund has already been able to provide financial assistance for five projects, including the Right to Know campaign aimed at reducing cancer incidents by educating B.C. workers about the hazards of asbestos.

Last year, the AREA Fund hosted its first annual Walk for Truth event. "The walk was a huge success," according to Tracy Ford (daughter of Dave), and this year's event is expected to be even bigger.

There will be a continuing education session for medical professionals, a book reading/signing with Canadian author Jim Williams for his award-winning novel *Rock Reject*, set in a B.C. asbestos mining town, and fire fighters and Sparky will attend for a photo op with the kids. The fee is \$10 per person (kids 12 and under participate for free) and there will be a by-donation hotdog barbeque after the walk.

"We believe the Walk for Truth event will be the single most important thing the AREA Fund will do this year," Ford said. "We want everyone to become aware of the hazards of asbestos so that exposure to it can be avoided. All asbestos is carcinogenic and there are no known cures for the diseases that asbestos creates." Knowledge and avoidance are the only answers. Visit www.area fund.ca or www.facebook.com/2013WalkForTruth



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