

The Arthritis Society: Walk This Way...

Addressing the looming shortfall of rheumatologists across the country is a priority for the CRA and its Ontario affiliate, the Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA).

For the past five years, ORA members have been coming together to support this important cause by participating in The Arthritis Society's Walk to Fight Arthritis, the single largest day of arthritis fundraising and awareness building in Canada.

Three weeks before the national Walk, the ORA host their own Walk as part of their Annual General Meeting (AGM), providing their members and their families with a fun and positive way to engage in the cause together.

This year's ORA Walk, held in Muskoka, saw more than 125 rheumatologists and family members raise over \$17,000 in a show of solidarity with the patients they care for throughout the year.

"I think it's important that we recognize the important role that The Arthritis Society plays in our profession", says ORA President Dr. Arthur Karasik. "From providing the therapists and social workers that many of us depend on to help our patients adjust to life with a chronic disease, working with us to develop a new Models of Care strategy, supporting many of us in our early development as clinicians and researchers in this field, The Arthritis Society is a vital ally and partner for the ORA and our members. We're proud to partner with them in working to bring along the next generation of rheumatologists who will support our patient communities."

Joanne Simons, Chief Mission Officer of The Arthritis Society, told the *CRAJ* she sees the role of rheumatologists as critical: "The support of the ORA, the CRA, and their members is vital to the advancement of arthritis care. Above and beyond the work you do in your day-to-day practice to improve quality of life for Canadians with arthritis, you are stepping forward to support improved access to care for patients now and in the future. Whether through the Walk, or through your support for the Every Member campaign, your contributions are helping us attract more bright young medical minds to the rheumatology profession, and helping build the foundation for future care. We can't thank you enough."



ORA President Art Karasik (centre) is flanked by Ed Ziesmann (left), The Arthritis Society Vice-President of Education, Programs, and Services and Joanne Simons, Chief Mission Officer (right) at this year's ORA Walk in Muskoka.

This year's national Walk to Fight Arthritis was held on June 7, and raised \$1.1 million (including a further \$28,000 raised by rheumatologists), which brought the Walk's six-year total to \$8 million in funds raised for arthritis programming, professional development, and research.

The next national Walk will be held on Sunday, June 5, 2016, and once again the ORA's members will be in the starting blocks three weeks earlier to kick-start another successful Walk year.

For information about supporting the Walk or the Every Member campaign, please contact Sandra Dow at sdow@arthritis.ca, or by phone at 416-979-7228 ext. 3343.

