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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ATTENTION: News, Local News, Seniors, Health, Medical, Social Services**

### **Markham Firefighters Take On Police From York Region and OPP In Combat Challenge To Raise Awareness and Support for Markhaven Home for Seniors**

MARKHAM, ON – October 7, 2008 – It was a cold morning and most people were still asleep when the barriers went up closing off Markhaven's parking lot. Staff arriving early found it a minor inconvenience but it was all for a good cause. This was the big day, the first ever Markhaven Heroes Challenge and teams of firefighters and police were arriving to compete in a skills competition using wheelchairs and wearing a special glove restricting hand movement.

Pedestrians and parents dropping their kids off at St. Josephs Catholic School across the street were curious about the closed lot and lone wheelchair sitting out front. But when the fire trucks arrived at 9:30 the action heated up and the crowd began to gather. As the teams did their practice runs and adjusted their technique to compensate for the sloped pavement, Grade 3 students from St. Josephs arrived and lined the parking lot to cheer for the favourite team.

The competition involved pulling the fire hoses out 100 feet, retrieving a dummy and bringing it back to the fire truck, racing back down the 100 foot course with a fire extinguisher, firing it at a target, returning to the truck again and pulling the fire hose back to the start. Two fire squads competed and then two police teams with the winning teams going on to the final round. In the end it was the Firefighters' Blaze Attackers team that won the competition.

Brian Rennick, President of The Markhaven Foundation, thanked participants and spectators and reminded them that the ultimate winners were the 96 heroes living in Markhaven. Special recognition was given to firefighters David Blizzard, Public Education / Fire Prevention Officer and Jim Houston, Chair - Public Relations Committee, for organizing the event.

Other participants were firefighters Mike Bekking, Jackie Dyson, Mike Haliburton, Jonatan Howard, Dave Job, Chris Lane, Shawn Lavigne, Mark Van Luen, Rocky Mino, Rob Pittelli and Rob Whitmore; York Regional Police Constables Jeff Bailey, Jason Griffiths, Mia Lau, Thang Ly, Derek Traimer and Bernadette Wheeler; and OPP Constable Ruta Delzotto.

**About Heroes Challenge:** Heroes Challenge is a public awareness campaign designed to foster healthy appreciation for what seniors feel as they begin to lose their independence, to honour our seniors as heroes for their contribution to our society and to raise support for Markhaven Home for Seniors.

**About Markhaven:** Markhaven has been providing top-quality nursing care to the Markham area since 1960. It is the oldest non-profit, long-term care facility in York Region and has an outstanding reputation in the community. Markhaven is thankful for the support of the community and community groups like Markham Fire, York Regional Police and the OPP.

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For information about Markhaven and the Heroes Challenge visit [www.heroeschallenge.ca](http://www.heroeschallenge.ca)

To arrange an interview or a tour of Markhaven Home for Seniors  
contact Brian Rennick at 905-472-4779 x3400 or [bkrennick@bellnet.ca](mailto:bkrennick@bellnet.ca)