

Montreal's Hilarious Riders rev up support by giving back to the community

Motorcycle club hopes to counter negative stereotypes about bikers

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Next month, members of the club will travel to Haiti — a trip they've made in the past, since many members are of Haitian origin — to build a school, and volunteer at a local orphanage and hospital. (Courtesy the Hilarious Riders)

If you hear the roar of motorcycles in the Montreal area, you might be in the joyful presence of the Hilarious Riders.

The club started off merely as a group of friends meeting up to do something fun once a month.

But their love for motorcycles — and for giving back to the community — has been contagious.

With as many as 20 bikers in tow, people quickly became on the lookout for the group, said James Yacinthe, its president and founder, who grew up in the Montreal borough of Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie.

"[They] were calling us: 'Where are the hilarious guys? You know, the guys that were having fun, that are always joyful?'" Yacinthe told CBC Montreal's *Daybreak* this week.

As the group's positive reputation grew, so did its membership — and the more the bikers wanted to give back.

"The more we grew," Yacinthe explained, "the more we wanted to have an impact socially and invest ourselves in this community."

Group gives back to the community

The group started giving back in 2005 by helping out at a walk for cancer research in Montreal.

"We started doing security on our motorcycles for the walkers," said Thierry Carries, a member and spokesperson for the group.

"We had a blast doing this. So we did that through all the years that they existed. We did it for 10 years."

That first taste of philanthropy turned into a full-blown passion for the Hilarious Riders.



The motorcycle club currently counts 28 members, and each new recruit has to take on some volunteer work before joining. (Courtesy the Hilarious Riders)

They have raised funds for the Montreal Children's Hospital, participated in a polar bear plunge in support of the Paralympics, and in June, they held a blood drive in support of sickle cell anemia research.

Next month, they will travel to Haiti — a trip they've made in the past, since many members are of Haitian origin — to build a school, and volunteer at a local orphanage and hospital.

Countering stigma against bikers

Today, the Hilarious Riders count 28 members.

Each new recruit has to take on some volunteer work before joining, and the group has a code of ethics everyone must abide by.

Once they're in, members regularly wear custom-made, leather jackets with the word "Hilarious" emblazoned on them.

The group's members try to use their style to reach at-risk youth in and around Montreal, Yacinthe said.

Another part of the group's mission is to change the negative stereotypes people may have about bikers. The point, Yacinthe said, is to show kids that you can look cool — and do positive things.

With files from CBC Montreal's Daybreak

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