

Comedy show sets sights on London

BY NOEL GALLAGHER
Free Press Arts
& Entertainment Reporter

"Share the laughter and see the hope" is the catchphrase for Comic Vision 2006 in London at Yuk Yuk's Comedy Club, tomorrow night.

"Blindness really touches everybody because we all know how valuable our vision is to do everyday things like learn, read, write, work and play," said Wendy McDonald who, with husband Peter, is co-chairing the show, a fundraiser for the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

Comedians Gerry Dee, Gord Paynter, Evan Carter and Meg Soper will perform at the first local edition of Comic Vision, which began in 1999 and is staged in Oakville and Toronto.

The project was created by Ann Morrison of Burlington, a friend of the McDonalds.

Morrison's son, Gavin, was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa (RP), a genetic eye disease that causes blindness. About 40,000 Canadians have RP, which strikes during childhood, and there is no treatment or cure.

"The reason I chose to be involved is because I'm attached to the cause personally, but also because I've gone to nearly every Comic Vision show and laughed my

guts out at all of them," McDonald said.

Headlining the London show is Scarborough native Dee, who played former Boston Bruins great Wayne Cashman in the recent CBC-TV miniseries *Canada Russia '72*.

This summer, the comic will be seen playing Donny in *Trailer Park Boys: The Movie*.

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is the only Canadian organization dedicated solely to funding research to discover causes, treatments

and cures for genetic eye diseases that cause blindness.

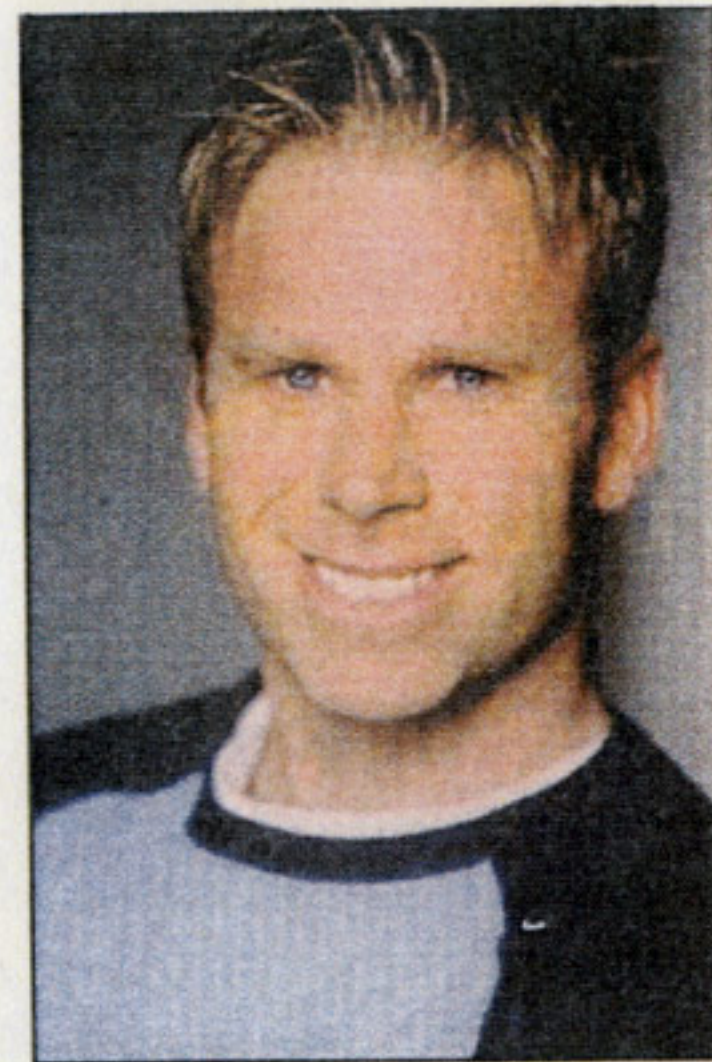
Established in 1974, the Toronto-based organization has funded more than \$14 million in vision research.

Though no financial target has been set for tomorrow's fundraiser, organizers hope it will generate enough interest to become an annual event.

"Our primary goal for this show is to fill the seats at Yuk Yuk's with people who love to laugh," said McDonald, a physiotherapist at Thames Valley Children's Centre. "Londoners have always been big supporters of health-related issues and medical research.

"It's been my experience that the show and the cause sell themselves to anyone who sees it once."

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FUNNY MAN: Stand-up comedian Gerry Dee is the headliner for Comic Vision 2006 in London, tomorrow night at Yuk Yuk's Comedy Club.

IF YOU GO

What: Comic Vision 2006 in London, a fundraiser for the Foundation Fighting Blindness; featuring comedians Gerry Dee, Gord Paynter, Evan Carter and Meg Soper

When: Tomorrow, 8 p.m. (doors open 7 p.m.)

Where: Yuk Yuk's Comedy Club, 340 Wellington St.

Tickets: \$50; call 660-1797.