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For the love of the game

By **ALYSSA NOEL, SUN MEDIA**

It's a chance to honour their friends and move forward after two tragic blows.

Sam Cooper said the idea for the inaugural Reagan Williams and Phil Allard Memorial Squash Tournament, which runs tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday, sprouted from a desire to laugh, sweat and celebrate in the name of friends killed in a plane crash.

Williams, CEO and president of A.D. Williams Engineering Inc., was at the controls of the plane that crashed March 28 near Battle River, 210 km southeast of Edmonton. Allard and three others on board were also killed.

Williams's father and company founder, Allen Williams, 60, died Oct. 28 when the small aircraft he was flying went down near Golden, B.C.

Although Cooper, one of the organizers and a close friend of Williams and Allard, said friends and family are still in mourning, the tournament will help bring some smiles to the community while raising money for local organizations.

"My friends would want us to play hard, have a big laugh and make a new friend," Cooper said, adding he, Williams and Allard used to play squash four to five times a week.

Word quickly spread about the tournament, interest swelled and 100 players - from beginners to pros - registered. Organizers also decided to include a silent auction on Sept. 20 at Khazana Restaurant, 10177 107 St.

Proceeds will go to a scholarship for underprivileged kids to play squash under Allard's name and towards the University of Alberta alumni association for Williams. "The tournament helps the mourning process in the way that it honours the spirits of our friends," Cooper said.

Registration to play in the tournament is closed, but members of the public are encouraged to come and watch at the Royal Glenora Club beginning tomorrow at 6 p.m.

Tickets for the silent auction and dinner can be purchased there as well.

Businesses or individuals who wish to donate, can drop off donations or cash at the club under the tournament's name.