

Holiday Heroes campaign fills hospital with toys for kids in need



A mountain of toys greeted visitors to Southlake Regional Health Centre on Friday as hospital staff and the York Regional Police packed up the haul for local kids in need.

A record number of toys were collected this year by Southlake staff for the Holiday Heroes campaign, a partnership with York Regional Police, which delivers toys to clients of the Children's Aid Society of York Region and other like organizations as December 25 approaches.

"This is unbelievable," said Brian Bigras, Deputy Chief of the York Regional Police, upon sight of the solid wall of colourful toys, books, and games ready to be wrapped for their ultimate recipients.

A recent addition to the Board of the Southlake Regional Health Centre foundation, Bigras said that since his appointment he has taken the opportunity to get to know the local hospital, including the people that work tirelessly to serve patients and the Southlake community every day.

"I am super impressed and proud of the commitment to service and care that every member of the team invests in their work each and every day and always for the right reasons," he continued. "Each and every day, you work to deliver excellence in patient care but it doesn't just stop with excellence in patient care; it is evident to me that everyone here at Southlake truly embodies their purpose, building healthy communities through outstanding care, innovative partnerships and amazing people. Southlake cares about their patients, their patients' families and their communities. You are compassionate, caring and thoughtful in all that you say and do."

"As I look around, I am absolutely amazed and overwhelmed by the generosity that has been extended here by these amazing people. You have yet again demonstrated the spirit of giving during the festive season. Your generous donations will help deliver a happy holiday season to thousands of people right here in York Region who need it most. This includes families who

are struggling to make ends meet, victims of human trafficking and survivors of domestic abuse, as well as their children. Since the launch of Holiday Heroes in 2008, we have raised more than \$1.8 million in monetary donations, toys, clothing and food. Everything we raise stays right here in York Region. The success of this program is a direct result of the ongoing support and generosity of our community. Thank you once again for helping to make a big difference in many families across York Region.?

Also on hand to help wrap up the 2019 Holiday Heroes campaign was Arden Krystal, President & CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre.

?It is great to see so many Southlake staff, physicians and volunteers here today as well who care about and who want to bring joy to our communities, especially during this time of year,? she said. ?Thank you all for your generous donations. As you can see this year, I think we have outdone ourselves. I think it is even more than we have had in years passed. I am proud to be part of an organization made up of caring and compassionate people and I am not surprised this is a cause you have all been passionate about contributing to year after year. Thanks to the Holiday Heroes campaign, all these items will go to families in need right here in York Region.?

By Brock Weir