

Run or Walk for Southlake speeds past fundraising goal



By Jake Courtepatte

A cold spring day wasn't enough to damper the warm atmosphere of over 1,500 participants in Sunday's Run or Walk for Southlake. The annual fundraiser for the Region's largest healthcare centre was held in Newmarket for the second year, kicking off from Newmarket's Seniors' Meeting Place before following a five-kilometre path down Davis Drive.

Raising just over \$160,000 by race day, that amount continues to climb as online donations pour in, sitting just over a lofty \$172,000 by press time.

'It was a bit cold, but fun anyways!' said Arden Krystal, President and CEO of Southlake. 'I just want to thank all the community and staff, without them, an event of such a capacity could never happen.'

The Cancer Centre Cruisers won the hospital department Team Challenge, raising a whopping \$19,280, while Team East Gwillimbury won the Municipal Challenge while setting a record in bringing in just over \$13,000.

Team Aurora, made up of Aurora Council, family and friends, pulled in just over \$5,000 for the cause.

'Another cold morning, but that didn't stop everyone from coming out,' said Councillor Tom Mrakas. 'Great to see everyone out in support of our hospital.'

The Aurora Soccer Club was also successful in raising around \$1,500, while Orange Theory Fitness of Newmarket-Aurora raked in close to \$2,000.

The Optimist Club of Aurora raised just over \$1,200 as well.

'Team Kimmy' won the Community Friends and Family Challenge, pulling in close to \$10,000.

With the first runners pulling up to a cheering crowd at the finish line around 9:30am, family and friends were entertained by George St. Kitts, a Jun-nominated Motown artist, at the Centre's Athlete Village.

The Run or Walk for Southlake is the largest community fundraiser held annually by Southlake Foundation, raising vital funds to purchase new and replacement equipment across the hospital. Current equipment needs include anesthesia machines, operating room lights and hospital beds and mattresses, all critical elements to providing world-class care to Southlake's patients in York Region and the surrounding communities.

Having flourished into the grand spectacle it is today since its beginnings in 2002, the bar has been raised each year in terms of raised funds.

Now in its sixteenth year, the event has raised over \$1-million netted in its span.

Since the inception of the Southlake Foundation in 1980, the parent organizer of the annual event, more than \$100 million has been raised for the centre.

Donations can still be made at www.southlakefoundation.ca.