

Southlake Run set for in-person and virtual return this spring

It is one of the biggest annual fundraisers for Southlake Regional Health Centre and, after a pause due to the global pandemic, the Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake is set for an in-person return this April.

The fundraiser, which collects pledges to buy much-needed equipment for the hospital, will be a hybrid affair this year with virtual programs running throughout the month of April before culminating with an in-person event on Sunday, April 24, to allow participants to ?join at their comfort level.?

?For 100 years, Southlake has shown a passion to care for our communities,? says Brian North, a long-time volunteer with the Southlake Foundation. ?From our beginnings as a six-bed care home, Southlake has evolved to become a 500-bed regional healthcare centre that provides leading-edge hospital services.

?Southlake is building healthy communities through outstanding care, innovative partnerships, and amazing people. Southlake is our hospital. It is where friends, families, neighbours and community members go to receive leading-edge care, cancer treatment and emergency visits. Southlake is proud to serve our communities with state-of-the-art procedures that improve patients' lives every day.

?The Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake is one of the ways our communities fund the tools and equipment needed. By registering for this event, you will be supporting the most urgent needs for patient care: from basic needs like beds to cutting-edge equipment like an MRI and enhanced spaces, you can help our expert frontline staff provide our communities with the best possible care right here at home.?

Southlake, North added, is ?looking to the future? to make sure Southlake's service keeps pace with community needs.

Fundraising events like the Run are essential in meeting this goal.

North introduced the event at last week's Council meeting where he challenged Aurora Councillors to not rest on their laurels in retaining the Mayor's Challenge trophy, which is awarded to the municipality within Southlake's catchment area that raises enough money for the event.

Aurora has been the defending champ since 2019 and Mr. North said efforts last year contributed 53 per cent to the municipal fundraising totals.

?I think it is fantastic that we're back in person again this year,? said Councillor Michael Thompson. ?I know it has always been a well-attended event and I am looking forward to seeing everyone out there this year, being a part of Team Aurora and once again bringing home the municipal trophy to the Town of Aurora.?

Added Mayor Tom Mrakas, addressing Mr. North: ?Thank you for the work you and your entire committee have done? to ensure this event continues. The funds that are much needed by our hospital continue to flow?to allow them to purchase the vital equipment that is needed to help residents throughout all of our communities.

?We have held on [to the cup] for three years straight and I can assure you from my perspective we're going to do it again because I know Team Aurora is extremely dedicated when it comes to raising funds for our hospital.?

Councillor Harold Kim agreed, noting that Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury are ?a very generous catch basin for fundraising.

?I think people will be really excited [that] we can gather, get together to do this run outside and support our hospitals all for a good

cause,? concluded Councillor Rachel Gilliland, who chaired last week's meeting. ?Thank you again for all your hard work.?

For more in the 2022 Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake, including how to register or support a participant, visit give.southlake.ca/site/TR/RunorWalkforSouthlake/P2P?pg=entry&fr_id=1611.

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