

Still time to support local hospital ahead of Sunday's Southlake Run

Registration to participate in this Sunday's Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake is now closed, but there are still plenty of ways to support the local hospital's biggest annual fundraiser.

The 2024 Run for Southlake is set to take place the morning of April 28 beginning at the Newmarket Seniors Meeting Place on Davis Drive.

With this being the 100th anniversary year for Southlake Regional Health Centre, organizers are hoping each participant can raise at least \$100 for local healthcare and they can only do so with the help of pledges.

There are lots of different ways you can support, says pediatrician Dr. Charmaine Van Schaik, Southlake's Chief of Staff. You can sponsor a friend or community member, you can go online and support a team, you can come out and participate along the sidelines and cheer people on so many ways to support both financially and emotionally.

Ahead of the run, Dr. Van Schaik says there is great anticipation for what Sunday will hold, as is the case for the Doctor every year that participants hit the pavement for the organization so much so that staff members have broken into teams, some of which she describes as very competitive.

As a person who lives in the community, for me it is participation from a perspective of a citizen and supporting the local hospital, she says. A lot of community fundraising that happens to support hospital equipment literally puts the tools in my hand and that of my colleagues, together with all other healthcare professionals in the hospital, to be able to do the work we do to serve [the community].

We pride ourselves on providing excellent care to our community I want that as a clinician, I want that as a citizen, I want that for my parents, and I want that for my patients.

Dr. Van Schaik participates in the Run for Southlake each year and likes to do a bit of a sprint here and a little bit more of a walk there to give her the chance to interact with participants along the way. It's important, she says, to learn why they came out and, especially, to thank them for their support.

There are lots of great teams that come out from our community, some of the teams are older in years, some of them are younger in years and it is really [about] connecting with them as well for the priority they're making for Southlake, she says. Some of them come out for the competitive aspect of things it's a good run for some people who are looking for times for qualifying and training and they talk about feeling good doing something for their community and hospital. For others, it's that feel-good and understanding that even as some of them are engaging in this, they don't really understand that funding doesn't come from government; it's sharing those conversations along the way, educating people, because if I tell one person who tells another person, it really gets that understanding out through our community on how we really do need and value their support.

The funding in question isn't just for the big things, she notes. It can come down to the basic equipment that we need right down at the frontlines to make a day-to-day difference.

One of our strongest attributes [at Southlake] is we have a really strong sense of family and of the care we provide and how we work. One of those really unique things about the Run is you see a lot of that; it's not just the staff families who are coming out, but you see families in the community who are coming out as a collective, be it through teams that are involved, their own nuclear family, but there is a lot of that collaboration that is evident there.

Come out, show your support support if you can financially in whatever capacity you can. It will go a long way to really reaching the inside of the hospital and the care we're able to provide.

For more on this weekend's Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake and opportunities to support an individual or team, visit southlake.ca/foundation.

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