

\$60,000 goal nearly reached in Great Hospice Activity Challenge

?Tee Off for Hospice? re-thinks fundraising golf tourney

Local hospices are just a few hundred dollars away from reaching their milestone goal in the 2020 Great Hospice Activity Challenge.

A virtual initiative spearheaded this year by Margaret Bahen and Doane House Hospices, the Activity Challenge was a new and social-distanced spin on their traditional Hike for Hospice spring fundraiser where participants could do any physical activity they wanted while raising much-needed funds for local hospice care.

Although the Challenge wrapped on September 11, donations are still rolling in and the organizations were approximately \$800 away from the finish line, which they hope to hit by the end of the month.

?We had really generous support from our community with different sponsors that supported the event,? says Jennifer Adams, Director of Development for Margaret Bahen Hospice. ?What I loved most was reading about different community members who are doing different types of things. We had an amazing woman named Cynthia Breadner who raised \$2,000 and her activity was doing a duathlon [which she promoted] on social media. She is a really great advocate for hospice, here for us, and reflects the feelings and connections we're looking for people to have with us.?

Other stand-out activities included individuals doing daily yoga, to community walks, one of which was carried out by staff member Chrissy Flynn in memory of her mother and sister, raising \$7,000 in the process, to even a motorcycle rally.

Another family, whose matriarch passed away at Margaret Bahen Hospice, surpassed their personal \$3,000 fundraising goal, and received sponsorships and donations of more than \$4,130 for the cause.

?We have a great community around us and a great community that is connected and supporting our hospice,? says Ms. Adams. ?We have been hit pretty hard since the onset of the pandemic and we have needed to make a lot of adjustments at Hospice in terms of how we operate, but through all of that we remained committed to keeping as much of a home-like environment as we can. In supporting our residents, we have maintained throughout the pandemic a 93 per cent occupancy, which is very high, and this shows we're really connected within the neighbourhood and with all the residents and families.

?It makes us feel really happy, proud and excited to know that we have a big circle of support around us.?

And this big circle is needed now more than ever before.

Each year, Hospice needs to raise \$850,000 to support ongoing operations. Although they receive some government funding to cover their medical team ? including doctors, nurses, and some personal support workers ? all other staff and administrative costs are funded through community donations.

Initiatives like the Great Hospice Activity Challenge also helps them maintain that home-like atmosphere for residents, including having freshly-baked goods on hand for residents and their families, supporting volunteer and staff training, and, this year, keeping necessary pieces of Personal Protective Equipment on hand to keep everyone safe.

?Donations that come through events like these, and other overall donations to Hospice, are just so important to us because we're able to have that flexibility to continue to offer those types of programs and supports to our residents who are staying with us,? says Ms. Adams. ?One of the really important and special things about our Hospice that our team works on is the creation of those 'hospice moments' ? special and unique experiences that our recreational and support team create for different residents.

'Our 'hospice moments' come out of getting to know the resident, getting to know what they like to do in their life, and the kinds of things that are special for them. Earlier in the summer, one of our personal support workers was chatting with a resident and he just mentioned he loved being outside enjoying popsicles on a hot day. She made it happen. Little things like that are 'hospice moments' and we have bigger ones as well. In the past, we brought in horses to Hospice because there was someone who was a life-long horse lover.

'They are the things that give us the best end-of-life care we have for our residents.'

As donations continue to roll in and they get ever-closer to their \$60,000 fundraising goal, Hospice is brainstorming more ways to ensure they maintain these 'hospice moments.'

Unable to hold their traditional golf tournament due to present health restrictions, they have translated this idea to an individualized golf experience branded 'Tee Off for Hospice.' Rather than a traditional tourney, it is a voucher package for 18 holes of golf, use of a cart, and a bistro lunch at Pheasant Run Golf Club.

Vouchers, which can be purchased now, are valid through May 31, 2021.

For more information on how to help Margaret Bahen and Doane House Hospices reach and surpass their \$60,000 fundraising goal, or how to secure your voucher for Tee Off for Hospice, visit myhospice.ca.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter