

CHATS golf tourney raises more than \$200,000 to support respite programs for clients, caregivers



It can sometimes be difficult to fully understand the realities of being a caregiver, unless you've walked the road yourself.

It's a road that CHATS (Community and Home Assistance to Seniors) walks every day with their clients', their caregivers, and families ? and local golfers came together to help make that road a little smoother at the second-annual CHATS' Swing for Seniors Tournament.

Held at Lebovic Golf Club in Aurora's southeast, the event raised more than \$200,000 for CHATS' CIBPA Place operations, providing essential respite care and support for seniors living with dementia and their caregivers.

?The incredible support we received at this year's Swing for Seniors Golf Tournament demonstrates the strength and compassion of our community,? said Christina Bisanz, CEO of CHATS. ?Reaching our \$200,000 goal is an extraordinary accomplishment that simply would not have been possible without our sponsors, golfers, donors, volunteers and community partners.?

Special thanks went out to Joanne Barnett and The Kerbel Group, who helped bring in the final dollars to help CHATS reach their ultimate goal.

?CIBPA Place is York Region's first not-for-profit overnight respite care home for people with dementia,? Bisanz tells The Auroran. ?It's a short stay program for anything from two to 14 nights, and it is really designed to provide family members, caregivers, with an opportunity to have a loved one stay as a guest at CIBPA Place, while the family maybe takes some time for themselves, or goes away, and knows their loved one is going to be safe and engaged in a very, very home-like environment.?

CIBPA Place is operated in partnership with the not-for-profit Care As One, which owns the property and the heritage home at the heart of it all.

?Over the last few years, we have been doing an amazing capital-raise because the house was actually built in 1860 and the home was completely gutted and brought up to modern standards,? says Bisanz. ?It has five bedrooms, a lovely kitchen, it will have a beautiful garden. All of the capital costs were covered, but what is not covered is the operating costs.

?CHATS' role going forward is to operate the home. Unfortunately, at this time, we haven't received any government funding for the operation, so that leaves it to us in the short term to raise funding for the operation costs ? that's things like staffing of our Personal Support Workers (PSWs) and that sort of thing in the house.

?The main objective is to provide an opportunity for respite for families who are caring for their loved ones who have dementia, are still living at home and are able to thrive at home, but their caregivers do, from time to time, need that relief so [as to not get] overwhelmed and feel they have some time to themselves because they devote so much time caring for their loved ones with dementia.?

Few organizations offer this type of short-term overnight respite care, she adds, making the need not just at the local level, but much more broadly, ?tremendous.?

?There are a couple of others, but this is the first not-for-profit [model]. Our program accepts guests from across the Region and [services are] provided in a very cost-effective way,? she says. ?The fee for our guests is \$100 a night and that includes their board and meals, and the meals are cooked fresh in the kitchen, [they can help] prepare food, if they're interested in doing so, and keep them active while they are staying at the house.?

The cause was close to the hearts of those who took part in last week's tourney, and their generosity was, in turn, recognized by CHATS.

As part of the post-tournament celebration, the organization presented its 2026 Heart at Home award to The Kerbel Group, recognizing their efforts to improve the lives of older adults.

?At Apetito Canada, we always circle the calendar for CHATS events to support our Meals on Wheels partner of over 20 years and connect with their staff and community members," said Jeff Gruchy, Commercial Manager, Apetito Canada, in a statement. "The Swing for Seniors event was a great day of golf and food and shined a light on the great work CHATS does every day. I will definitely be back at Lebovic to support again in September!?

For more on CHATS and the services they provide in York Region, South Simcoe, and beyond, visit www.chats.on.ca.

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