

Community volunteers needed for upcoming Southlake Run

The community is warming up for the 2024 Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake on April 28, but volunteers are always needed to ensure the event continues to be a resounding success for Southlake Regional Health Centre and the communities it serves.

Volunteers are essential before and on event day, according to the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation, including stuffing race kits, plotting out wayfinding, sorting corrals on race day and, of course, cheering on participants.

Volunteer positions are available for anyone high school-age or older, but if you are a student, the time you contribute to the event will count towards community service hours.

"Anyone who is willing to come out and spend a morning to contribute would be a good volunteer," says Southlake Run board member John Firman, who first got involved with the event as a volunteer when it was hosted in Aurora nearly 15 years ago. "There is all kinds of stuff to do, so you don't have to be an athlete! All you need to be a good volunteer is the willingness to come out and help.

"There is not a lot of real expertise required. We have people helping hand out water on the run, we have people helping cheer people along, people who help out if there is entertainment somewhere, maybe helping set that up and clean up the food stations and things like that at the end of the Run ? a variety of tasks. We encourage people to go to the Run for Southlake website and take a look at the opportunities that are available because we show them online as well.?"

Asked why people should consider volunteering, Firman stressed that although Southlake is based in Newmarket, it is Aurora's hospital as well ? as well as for portions of northern York Region and south Simcoe County.

"Sadly, at some point in our life, we will need a hospital," he says. "I look at this as an investment in the future. When you think about all the things that aren't funded by the Province, whether it be something big and fancy like a CT scanner or the basics that we don't usually think of, like just an IV pole, the little things ? all that is funded by fundraising and other revenue streams. To me, it's an investment in your future ? you're investing in the day you may need those services yourself and you need to be there.

"This is our hospital. We as the community need to support it to make sure the hospital has all the resources we as individuals may need for ourselves and our families in the future. Any way you can support is valuable, whether it is volunteering, running yourself, or sponsoring someone else who is running. At the end of it, all of it goes to support our hospital and it needs our support. For people who are participating, the registration dollars really cover the costs for our event. That's where the fundraising piece is so important: that's the money that actually comes to the hospital. Once you've registered, all you've done is paid for the costs for the event and we really encourage everyone to do that extra step and do the fundraising to get their friends, neighbourhood and families to sponsor them so we can generate those dollars that are needed for the hospital itself.?"

For more information on the 2024 Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake, including volunteer opportunities, registration, and how to sponsor and support an individual or team, visit runforsouthlake.ca.

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