

Docs on Ice raises record breaking \$275,000 in Aurora and Newmarket



By Jeff Doner

For two straight days, over 50 teams and hundreds of doctors and health care professions flocked to York Region for the 32nd annual Docs on Ice hockey tournament to help raise funds for the Canadian Mental Health Association ? York Region.

The tournament raised an unprecedented \$275,000 for the CMHA, well above the Docs' stated record-busting goal of \$200,001.

Over 800 doctors took part, taking over the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC), as well as the Magna Centre in Newmarket.

?People in this town have been so generous,? said Dr. Chris Gannage, chair of the tournament and an emergency physician at Southlake since 1990. ?That was pure cash and donations.?

?It has been a great success from a number of different angles, in terms of the most money raised and in terms of the enjoyment factor. Many have said that between these two rinks here and the four rinks at Magna that these are some of the best facilities that we have ever experienced in the 32 years.?

Gannage said it was the first time the charity of choice was for mental health, which is something that needs to be looked at more seriously by everyone.

He said funds will be directed to youth mental health and channeled into a youth mental health bus mobile unit that will go out to high schools and shopping malls.

?There is a huge need,? Gannage said. ?Unfortunately there is a bit of an epidemic going on and an interesting statistic is this: mental health is seven times that of all cancers combined in potential years of life lost. In other words, it's striking the young ones and it's just a huge burden of illness in our society that affects us all. The challenge is that a lot of people don't want to talk about it.?

With teams from all over Ontario consisting of doctors from those communities, the competition was fierce.

In the end, the Barrie A squad took the bragging rights home after winning the tournament on Sunday. The team was happy to be able to call themselves number one, but said it was secondary to what the tournament represents.

?It's a fantastic event that has been going on for 32 years, there are almost 50 teams of doctors from all over the province that compete for two days, have a lot of fun and raise a lot of money for charity,? said Dr. Stu Murdoch, from the Barrie Family

Medicine Teaching Unit. ?It's the highlight of our Barrie doctors team.?

The roving tournament started in 1983 in Peterborough in memory of Dr. Peter Howes who died in a motor vehicle accident.

Since its inception the tournament has substantially grown in size and fundraising numbers. Since 1983, over \$1 million has been raised for various charities.

For more information, visit www.docsonice.ca