

Hundreds Hike for Hospice, raising thousands



By Jeff Doner

Sunday's perfect weather and a good cause had participants out for The Doane House Hike for Hospice to raise money for the important community service.

It was the first year Doane House hosted a Hike for Hospice, which is an annual event across Canada every May 5. Early counts said roughly \$7,000 was raised at this year's hike.

With substantial support and interest from the community, Doane House executive director Juliet Irish said the event will continue each year.

"We're going to grow it," she said. "We had 94 people registered this morning and we've had lots of people coming in now. This has just been perfect, especially with the weather today. New Roads Auto Sales sponsored the event and put in a team of about 35 people to take part in the hike.

"We're in partnership with them and at the end of the year we're going to be doing a car raffle and you can win a 2013 Chevrolet Cruze, so that's really exciting."

There was also a large contingent of clients who brought out their family and friends for the event.

"The participants are made up mostly of clients who use the services, whether it's from diagnosis all the way through to bereavement. We support the whole family and 90 per cent of clients have cancer and the other 10 per cent have ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, cardiac and multiple sclerosis," Irish said.

The services of Doane House Hospice centre on peer support for those dealing with different conditions. They offer yoga, relaxation, visualization and Brain Frog, which can help with memory loss.

"Those are part of the wellness program and then we have the Oasis Day program, which is where they come and spend the day with us and it gives people who are isolated with the disease process an opportunity for us to walk them through their chemo, radiation and for some on the road to remission, back to a new norm."

Doane House currently serves roughly 539 clients and has 157 trained and dedicated volunteers, which underlines the need for this type of service in the community.

"We only have a staff of four, so we couldn't do what we do without our volunteers and we are always desperate for more," Irish

said.

As always, there is a need for funding and the Hike for Hospice is going to become a big part of that from now on for Doane House.

Looking for a way to help and get involved in the community, young volunteers Zameer Mukri, 15, and Muhammed Mukadan, 14, said they were glad to help out with the event.

?My older cousin has volunteered at the Hospice for a long time and she told me about this event, so I figured it would be a good idea to help out because it's for a good cause,? Zameer explained.

Added Muhammed: ?She told us to get involved and it feels good helping out. Just meeting new people here in the area and being out for this is for a really good cause.?

John Taylor, Newmarket's Regional Councillor, said the services Doane House provides is essential to the community and its surrounding areas.

?Being here at the Hike for Hospice [is important] because they are providing an incredible support to our community,? he said.

?Our community is about more than just buildings and roads, it's about people, a community that cares and takes care of one another.

?When somebody faces an incredibly challenging moment in their life around health and life and death, they need their loved ones, friends, family and community members to gather around and support them, but there's a support that a lot of us can't give and that's the professional support that Doane House provides. We need to support them to they can support us.?