

LIPS organization returns with significant support for Southlake cancer programs



After an extended hiatus due to the global pandemic, LIPS ? Ladies in Philanthropy for Southlake ? has picked up right where they left off, supporting breast cancer screening programs at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Since its foundation more than a decade ago, LIPS has raised more than \$700,000 for Southlake.

LIPS brings together philanthropic-minded women from across York Region, South Simcoe, and in some cases beyond, to make individual annual donations of \$1,000 to Southlake with the group as a whole voting to support a specific critical need at Southlake after hearing presentations from the hospital's clinicians.

This year's endeavour will help Southlake secure magnetic breast seeds, a less invasive and more accurate technology used in the treatment of breast tumours, an initiative which will impact approximately 200 women each year.

?We were pitched three very deserving projects and it was not an easy decision,? said Sarah Powell, Chair of the LIPS Steering Committee in a statement. ?This will make a huge difference to patients being treated for breast cancer at Southlake. Being able to make an impact like this in our community, especially for women, is truly what being a member of LIPS is all about.?

Southlake notes that the securement of these seeds will improve both efficiency and clinical outcomes for patients.

?We are so grateful for the continued support of LIPS and their engaged membership,? said Jennifer Ritter, President & CEO of the Southlake Foundation. ?Over the last 11 years, they have raised over \$700,000 for Southlake, funding critically needed equipment and life-saving programs. To see a passionate and dynamic group of women so dedicated to improving healthcare in their community is truly inspiring.?

Now that LIPS is back up and running, they're looking for more women in the community to join them in the cause.

At its height, LIPS boasted approximately 80 members, which generated in the neighbourhood of \$80,000 for Southlake each year. Since their hiatus, they have dipped down to 50 members, and they're looking to reverse that trend.

Powell tells The Auroran she first joined LIPS in 2016 eager to not only make a difference for Southlake, but for very specific, timely needs.

?The Foundation will put together six or seven projects (as suggested by their clinicians)?that are the most viable because they know what our criteria is,? says Powell. ?As a committee, we have a set criteria that we grade everything on. Some of the things we consider are, can we fully fund the project? If our donation will only cover half of it, we don't want to do that; we want to be able to fully fund it because it is something that can be implemented within the year. Our members want to know their money is being put to good use this year. We also want to make sure it is going to impact a large number of patients at the hospital. We then pick our top three and those are the ones that are presented to the membership at our voting meeting. Then we vote as a group at the end of the night, knowing exactly where our money is going to go.?

The fundraising element is simple, she says. All you need to do is donate \$1,000 for the year, which goes 100 per cent towards the donation. You don't need to donate the \$1,000 all at once, but it must come in within the year.

?We know the more members we have, the more money we will have to donate, which means the more spending power we have,? she says. ?The Foundation has been really supportive in the last couple of years helping to rebuild our website and get our names out there. For people who want to support the hospital, I think this is a fantastic opportunity. Not everybody has \$10,000 or more to donate every year to the hospital. Not only do you get to donate to the hospital and your community, you get to say, ?I think it is important that we fund the pediatric care or cancer care' and you get a vote on where you want your money to go. Maybe the vote won't always go your way, but we always try and pick projects that we think will resonate with our membership.

?It is a good opportunity just to get out and meet other women in the community. I think if you can get a group together on a regular basis, they start to become friends, not just people you see once a year at a voting meeting, and it becomes something that people look forward to and we would like to have that feeling of camaraderie again within the group.?

For more information about Ladies in Philanthropy for Southlake, including membership opportunities, visit give.southlake.ca/lips or email lipssouthlake@gmail.com.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter