

Run or Walk for Southlake surpasses lofty goal



By Jake Courtepatte

Rain could not put a damper on the spirits of the over 1,300 people who ran in support of York Region's largest healthcare centre on Sunday morning.

The annual Run or Walk for Southlake, now in its fifteenth year, went off without a hitch from Newmarket's Seniors' Meeting Place with participants following a five kilometre route along Davis Drive.

Held in Newmarket for the first time, this path took runners and walkers alike under the iconic Southlake arch – a reminder of what, and who, they were there for.

“We know that seeing the hospital as they run or walk under the arch is symbolic for our participants,” said Katherine Alyea, VP Philanthropy & Engagement at the hospital. “And, for the first time, our staff and our patients had the chance to see their community rally together in support of our hospital.”

The Run or Walk for Southlake is the largest community fundraiser held annually by Southlake Foundation, raising vital funds to purchase new and replacement equipment across the hospital. Current equipment needs include anesthesia machines, operating room lights and hospital beds and mattresses, all critical elements to providing world-class care to Southlake's patients in York Region and the surrounding communities.

Having flourished into the grand spectacle it is today since its beginnings in 2002, this year's goal of raising \$150,000 was met and continues to grow.

Dr. Dave Williams, CEO of Southlake, said the amount was “an astonishing undertaking,” yet “not one that this community couldn't accomplish.”

“York Region pours its heart into this event year after year, and I couldn't be more proud,” said Williams. “I hope that number continues to grow with every passing year.”

The Scotiabank GTA team were the top corporate fundraisers for the event, bringing in almost \$13,000, while the Town of Newmarket won the Municipal Challenge with over \$8,000 raised.

The Community Friends and Family Challenge award went to the Spring Hill Spring Chicks and Jocks of King Township, who donned yellow raincoats and white fedoras while adding close to \$6,000 to the total.

Team Aurora, including Mayor Geoff Dawe and councilors Harold Kim and Jeff Thom, raised just over \$4,000 for the cause.

Other notable Aurora contributors were the Aurora Panthers organization and the CFUW Aurora with just under \$1,000 each, and the Aurora Soccer Club and the Optimist Club with close to \$1,500 each.

Team “Damn Straight”, aptly named for the catchphrase of Bob Hartwell of whom the original event was run for in 2002, brought in over \$3,800 led by Aurora's Steve Hinder.

Since the inception of the Southlake Foundation in 1980, more than \$100 million has been raised for the centre.

Donations can still be made at www.southlakefoundation.ca.