

Southlake Health ends milestone year on high note for capital campaigns

Southlake launched its \$20 million HERE is Where Cancer Meets its Match campaign in 2022 with a \$1 million donation from The Powell Group, supporting radiation oncology services.

Two years on, the Powells' contribution was celebrated last week with the unveiling of a new Radiation Treatment Suite dedicated in their honour.

‘It was so important to us that we give back to the community that’s given so much to us,’ said Matthew Powell in a statement. ‘This gift will help to ensure our employees, customers, families, and friends have access to exceptional cancer care, close to home at such a critical time. We’re so proud to have this space named in celebration of our organization and our family.’

Added Derek McNally, Executive Vice President of Clinical Operations for Southlake Health: ‘With the generous support of donors like the Powells, Southlake Health is proudly building on a 100-year legacy of leading edge care, close to home. The Elekta Harmony LINAC has been game-changing for our communities. We’re bringing the latest advancements directly to patients because they deserve nothing less.’

Last week’s dedication ceremony was a fitting way for Southlake to end its milestone 100th anniversary year.

It’s been a busy time for the local hospital and this contribution, as well as smaller but no less impactful donations, have helped Southlake reach or approach many long-held goals.

‘The Powell Gift was really significant because it was the first Corporate Leadership gift for this campaign when we kicked it off, so, it gave the campaign momentum; it demonstrated to the community the importance, and we’re judged by the company we keep,’ says Lesley Ring of the Southlake Health Foundation. ‘When various families and companies stand with Southlake and against cancer, others take notice. We were very grateful. This campaign has also had a very short timeframe. With our communities growing at the rate they are growing, and also aging in the rate they are aging and knowing that age is your number one risk factor for getting cancer, we had to really move to end wait times for our cancer patients. When someone is facing cancer, time is of the essence. The quicker that we could raise these funds then we would be able to make progress.’

‘We quickly brought the PET CT to the Regional Cancer Program, we followed up with the linear accelerators, we’re working still through systemic therapy and the MRI. With the support of Powell in those early stages, we have now actually completed the radiation therapy portion of the campaign with the replacement of the three original linear accelerators that when we opened the Cancer Centre just over a decade ago, and now also the addition of a fifth, which just saw its first patient on December 2.’

As the end of this year approaches, along with the dawn of 2025, Ring says a key priority will be ‘closing out’ the Cancer Campaign, which is just \$2 million away from reaching its target.

‘We can’t do what we do without the support of our generous community because government does not fund new or replacement equipment, or renovations or expansion to our current spaces. Our donors have absolutely stepped up, they prioritize local care close to home, and we have been very, very fortunate this year to close out our Homeward campaign, our campaign in support of the Maternal Child Program, with the volunteer leadership of Chris and Wendy Neal.’

‘We’re bringing a new MRI to Southlake and that is imminent and construction is underway. We certainly want to reach out and ideally exceed our \$20 million goal, and that will enable us to complete our cancer projects,’ says Ring. ‘With our gala this past October, we launched The Future Is Now (campaign) and that turns our focus to one of the most significant challenges Southlake faces, and that is our Emergency Department. Our Emergency Department has had no significant expansions or upgrades in the last two decades and we’re seeing over 120,000 patients in spaces that were built for less than half of that patient volume. If you’ve driven by, you may have seen some signs of construction as we work to expand and renew the space and also provide some

much-needed new technologies and equipment as well. That will be a significant focus for us through next year.?

Although Christmas is less than a week away, there are still opportunities to support the Southlake Health Foundation before the close of 2024. Now through Christmas Eve, members of the Foundation and volunteers will be at Upper Canada Mall wrapping gifts in exchange for a donation, which will benefit needs across Southlake's services.

Tickets to Southlake's ongoing 50/50 lottery are also ?great stocking stuffers,? Ring adds.

By Brock Weir