

Southlake Run results have everyone ?over the moon?



By Jeff Doner

After weeks of fundraising and canvassing, the final numbers are in for the Nature's Emporium Run or Walk for Southlake and they have everyone over the moon.

In total, \$226,000 was raised for priority healthcare needs at Southlake Regional Health Centre, which was nearly 10 per cent higher than the original goal of \$206,000.

?To know that our community rallies around such an important cause is truly inspiring,? said Nature's Emporium Run or Walk for Southlake Chair, Steve Hinder. ?Supporting quality healthcare close to home is a cause that everyone can relate to.?

The walk/run took place a few weeks ago, but fundraising continued until May 15.

Spearheading the town of Aurora's fundraising efforts were Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and Councillor Sandra Humfreys, who helped raise \$9,735 for Southlake.

Of the ?northern six? municipalities of Aurora, King, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury and Georgina, Aurora's total won them Mayor's Cup for this year. This is a friendly competition between the six municipalities, in which the top fundraising municipality wins the cup. Last year King Mayor Steve Pellegrini won the distinction.

?It's just terrific. We have great relationships between ?the northern six? [municipalities], but that's not to say there isn't just a wee bit of rivalry,? said Mayor Dawe with a laugh. ?So it's just fun, but I think obviously the more important part was putting the challenge out there to the municipalities to get a few more bucks in the door.?

Councillor Sandra Humfryes was also thrilled that the Town of Aurora was able to raise so much for a good cause.

?We're so excited. The majority was raised by Mayor Dawe; he got out there the last two weeks and said we've got to work hard at this. Everyone did. And it's all for such a great cause ? for our local hospital,? she said.

?To host the event here this year was an honour itself and then to be the winners is just a great feeling. And I can't wait to get the cup into Town Hall,? she said with a laugh.

Even though this year's fundraising has come to a close, Councillor Humfryes is already looking ahead to next year, adding that she hopes the event will continue to grow each year.

?I believe the funds raised are over \$225,000, which was over the goal for this year, and was 24% more than we raised last year,? she said.

?Our target is to get to 5,000 walkers and maybe even bigger than that in the next few years, so we're really working hard to get more participation out there for a great cause.?

With roughly 1,500 participants this year and 2,343 donations on total, Mayor Dawe added that the event is important in many different ways.

?It's just a great community event that brings people together. It's fun to have all those people come out to support the hospital, we all use it,? he said.

?It's extremely important. Before I got in this business I didn't really understand the funding formulas and a substantial component of the funding model for hospitals is local engagement. If you want to put equipment and things like that in the hospital, you're on your own, which is why the Southlake Foundation has really engaged in fundraising for all sorts of equipment. People should really understand that the money is going to a service that really benefits us all.?