

Team Aurora takes Run for Southlake's Municipal Challenge

By Jake Courtepatte

The Run or Walk for Southlake far surpassed its goal of \$175,000 this year, thanks in large part to support from teams like Team Aurora.

Led by captain Councillor Michael Thompson, the group of Councillors, along with Mayor Geoff Dawe, raised over \$7,000 for the Southlake Foundation, helping the hospital purchase critically-needed equipment.

"The Run/Walk is so important," said Councillor Thompson. "The Government of Ontario provides no funding for hospital equipment. Southlake depends on pledges and the fundraising efforts of the Foundation to fund these vital upgrades across the hospital so that each and every one of their patients can receive the world-class care that our community expects from Southlake."

Last month, hundreds of supporters came together to support the Newmarket-based care centre, one of the largest fundraisers organized by the hospital.

Just over \$200,000 was raised for the event, held for the first time at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex.

"It has become what we wanted it to be, a real community event," said foundation president and CEO Neila Poscente. "There are all different people who participate, from your serious runners to those walking with strollers."

Team Aurora had their own personal victory, taking first-place in the annual "Municipal Challenge" with the other municipalities across the York Region, bringing the Mayor's Cup to Aurora.

"While we are all proud of the team's efforts and to have won the Mayor's cup, the real winner is the hospital and everyone who uses it," added Thompson.

Mayor Virginia Hackson of East Gwillimbury took home the trophy last year, as her team raised just shy of \$10,000.

The Aurora team, which had an overall goal of reaching \$5,000, ranked fifth in overall donations. Scotiabank friends and family were able to raise \$25,000 for the cause.

Consisting of Aurora lawmakers, including Councillors Sandra Humfries, Jeff Thom, Tom Mrakas, Harold Kim, and Mayor Dawe, Team Aurora hit the pavement hard for donations as well as hosting a pizza party at Town Hall to solicit funds.

"It was wonderful to help support the hospital's efforts to continue providing the very best healthcare for our community, and to be part of such an amazing event," said Councillor Thompson.

Mayor Dawe also expressed his support of the event.

"It was great to see so many people supporting our world-class hospital to help ensure it continues to deliver cutting-edge research and care."

While a victory was earned this year, Thompson said Team Aurora is already looking to the future, with a goal of more participants joining the cause.