

Hike For Hospice is underway through May 29



The annual Hike For Hospice is on as the virtual event will be taking place between May 22 and 29.

This event, hosted by Better Living, encourages participants to hike or to take on a different challenging activity, in support of Margaret Bahen Hospice and Doane House Hospice.

In the official announcement last Tuesday at Margaret Bahen Hospice in Newmarket, Jennifer Adams, Vice President of Philanthropy with Better Living, lead things off and explained what participants must do.

"Participants can do their activities every day during the event period or on a single day, in a group or on their own," Adams said.

"However, we ask participants to share photos with us, using our hashtag, #Hike4Hospice. Through the generous support of our community, last year we raised \$82,000. This year, we have the big goal of setting our sights on \$95,000."

In attendance to share a few words, were Senior Vice President of Community Services with Better Living, Kristen Caballero, Newmarket Mayor John Taylor, and Sue and Jennelle Jaggernauth, whose husband and father Michael, passed away at Margaret Bahen Hospice in December of 2021.

Better Living, which was chosen to become the operator of MBH in 2017, continues to see roughly 250 residents each year receive end-of-life care. In 2019, Better Living integrated with Doane House Hospice as well.

In her speech, Caballero highlighted the operating costs of both hospices exceeds \$1.8 million per year. Government funding only supports \$1.1 million. The rest comes from events such as these and from the "generous support" of the community.

Participating in events like these might not be the first box to check on an every-day- to-do list, but, as Mayor Taylor put it into words, having a local hospice is a gift to the community and taking a few moments of your time means more than what you might think.

"There are communities larger than us that don't have a residential hospice and dearly would like to have one. We are so blessed to have this incredible facility," Mayor Taylor said, as his father-in-law passed away at Southlake Regional Health Centre before MBH was established.

?This specialized facility with workers and an atmosphere that is dedicated to making the end-of-life experience something that it should be, something dignified and something special, is a true gift to our community. So please, try to find a way to support somebody participating in the Hike for Hospice or sign up yourself at myhospice.ca?

Thinking of end-of-life care might be tough to digest and might not be something you think about. Losing the individual, of course, becomes the number one thought in your mind.

But when Sue Jaggernaut thought more about her husband's end of life care, she said it was a ?godsend? to be introduced to MBH.

She wheeled her husband into the care of MBH from Southlake Hospital.

?The care he was given was an unexpected blessing and one that I recounted countless times to family, friends, coworkers and anyone that would listen. It is with gratitude that we are pleased to participate and support the annual Hike for Hospice in Michael's name.?

For those who might not want to participate in the event and simply want to donate, head to myhospice.ca and click the tab at the right-hand corner of the screen ?Support My Hospice.?

By Robert Belardi