

Hit the pavement in May for annual Run for Southlake



By Jake Courtepatte

Runners, take your marks.

Plans are underway for the 2016 incarnation of the Nature's Emporium Run or Walk for Southlake, a charity fun run to bring much-needed funds to Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Executives, volunteers, and sponsors gathered at Spero Restaurant in Newmarket last Wednesday for the official kick-off, with the event only eight weeks away, set for May 1.

"There has been a lot of buzz within our office," said Neila Poscente, President and CEO of Southlake Foundation. "We're starting to see the excitement building in the community."

The fundraiser is one of many that play a crucial role in the continuing evolution of Southlake, as hospitals do not receive funding for new hospital equipment, outside of capital builds. Southlake depends on community support to update their tools and equipment.

Close to 2,000 runners took part in the 2015 event, raising over \$280,000 for the Centre. More than \$1 million has been raised since the event's inception.

Nature's Emporium returns as the title sponsor for the third year, led by Joe and Mary D'Addario.

New this year is the cancellation of a registration fee for participants, announced by Co-Chair Steve Hinder. Instead, Hinder and his team ask that every adult participant raise a minimum of \$75 in pledges.

"We made this change because it was important to recognize that, first and foremost, the Run or Walk for Southlake is a fundraising event," said Hinder. "What's great about this change, is that now every dollar you raise is not only tax-receiptable, but you also know every dollar goes back to Southlake to support the great work they do."

Prizes will be added as incentives for higher pledges, including a 2016 Run or Walk t-shirt with \$100. There will be an athlete's village on site, as well as stage entertainment at Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, which is where the run kicks off.

Find out more about the cause at southlakefoundation.ca.