

Southlake Run raises \$330,000 and counting for local health care



Hundreds of supporters of Southlake Regional Health Centre laced up their running shoes on Sunday for the annual Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake, raising \$330,000 and counting for local health care provided by the hospital.

Held April 24 on Newmarket's Davis Drive, the 2022 Run for Southlake was a return to in-person activities last held in 2019 and participants were not only eager to get in some exercise for a good cause but to also say thanks to the healthcare professionals who have been working tirelessly through the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're super-excited to be back in person," said Jennifer Ritter, President & CEO of the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation, who emceed the event alongside Southlake Regional Health Centre President & CEO Arden Krystal. "Together, alongside patients and staff, friends, family, supporters and volunteers, we're so grateful to have you all come out to support the jewel in our community, Southlake Regional Health Centre and the incredible people who have been looking after us for so many years and particularly during the last two difficult years."

"Today means so much to us," added Ms. Krystal. "It has been a long two years, but we've come together stronger and more resilient. Southlake is your hospital and we're here for you when you need us. We're always by your side and today you are here by our side when we need your support."

Sharing in the excitement was Newmarket Mayor John Taylor who said the "massive turnout for this incredibly important day" was an exciting one for north York Region and South Simcoe.

"Many of you are here because this hospital has touched you personally, for a family member, for yourself, a friend or maybe a parent, a mother, or a father like Madison Macken who runs each year in her father's memory," Ms. Ritter continued. "It is an important day and everyone is here because it has a great personal meaning."

This is certainly the case for Joe D'Addario, Owner of Nature's Emporium, the title sponsor for the event.

"Ten years ago when we first got involved with the Run, it was our dream that this would become a tradition and it's safe to say that indeed the Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake is a tradition," he said. "Thank you to this great community for always coming out and supporting us. It means so much to us. We have raised over \$2.3 million over the past 10 years and it's something I am very

humbled and very proud to be a part of. It's a great testament to our community and it underscores what is truly important to us all: living well and supporting our community.?

Speaking to the crowd, Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen hailed these community partners for helping build better communities.

?I am so proud to be a part of the community that champions healthcare for our families, our friends, and what our neighbours deserve,? he said. ?Your support here makes it possible to deliver leading-edge care close to home. Nothing is more important than our health and investing in our hospital is a vital concern and a vital priority for our community.?

At press time the 2022 Run for Southlake had raised north of \$330,000 with a strong showing from the Aurora community. The Town of Aurora's aptly named ?Team Aurora? currently leads by a significant margin in the Municipal Cup stakes, which is given to the municipal government that raises the most for the event. Orange Fitness Newmarket-Aurora is also leading the Corporate and Business Team Challenge, while the Optimist Club of Aurora leads the Community, Family & Friends Challenge.

Funds can still be pledged through May 13 with the Southlake Foundation hoping to raise more than \$400,000 by the time everything is counted.

For more, visit runforsouthlake.ca.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter