

Southlake spin raises \$20,000 for POGO unit



By Jeff Doner

The Southlake Regional Health Centre and Coast to Coast Against Cancer teamed up to raise money for the paediatric oncology clinic at the second annual Inside Ride at the Southlake Medical Arts building last week.

To fundraise for the event, teams assembled and collected funds throughout the year. Then on Friday, each participant rode a stationary bike for five to 10 minutes while their teammates rallied and cheered at their side.

The event has raised over \$20,000 so far, which crushed the original goal of \$15,000.

"We're so proud of the POGO [Paediatric Oncology Group of Ontario] program we have at Southlake and I really want to thank the team for all the hard work they do every day," said Southlake president and CEO Dr. Dave Williams. "Many of the people in the room see what we do first hand and I think this is just a tremendous opportunity. There's no question that we have a great challenge today, but we're all up to it. Thank-you everyone for the work you did, because it's certainly paying off."

The paediatrics oncology satellite clinic at Southlake is a 12-bed unit that has a specialized staff that provides care to children 0 ? 18 years of age suffering with a wide range of disease and illness.

Nurse coordinator of the POGO clinic, Lisa Egan-Bates, said she was overwhelmed with the support for the event.

"We feel so honoured that all of you made the effort to be involved today and as you know, all the money raised goes directly to help all the families who come to the Southlake paediatric oncology POGO satellite clinic," she told a room full of colourful and decorated participants.

Egan-Bates said the clinic sees an average of 130 visits per month, which is a number that has climbed since the clinic opened on Feb. 2 2009.

"Since then the entire organization has helped many kids and their families as they navigate the course of their cancer treatment," she said. "We're able to provide diagnostic testing and treatments here closer to their homes and in their own community. This means less travelling to Toronto, which impacts the family in many ways."

The annual event has become a favourite for many, with teams picking names and elaborate costumes to highlight their fundraising efforts.