

Hike for Bethell Hospice happening May 5 with \$245K fundraising goal

By **ZACHARY ROMAN**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

One of Caledon's largest fundraising events is coming soon.

On Sunday, May 5, the annual Hike for Bethell Hospice will take place in Inglewood, starting at the Lloyd Wilson Centennial Arena.

It will be the fourteenth iteration of the hike, which is held each year amid National Hospice & Palliative Care Week.

"The hike is a signature event for the Bethell Hospice Foundation (BHF), raising awareness and funds for palliative care in our community," said BHF Senior Manager of Marketing and Communications Kelly Stronach.

The goal of this year's hike is to raise \$245,000 through a combination of pledges, sponsorships and donations. Funds raised through the hike ensure that the hospice and palliative care services at Bethell Hospice remain free to everyone.

Stronach shared the words of a 2023 hike participant: "Bethell Hospice is one of the services that really helps people who are in their final few weeks. We thought the hike was a great way to help raise funds needed by the hospice."

Registration for this year's hike opens at 8 a.m. at Lloyd Wilson Centennial Arena. An opening ceremony with remarks will take place at 9 a.m. and then the hike itself will begin. Hikers will take a short walk up to the Caledon Trailway, an accessible and beautiful location for the hike. It will be five kilometres in length and when it's finished, hikers can enjoy a post-hike lunch sponsored by Palgrave Rotary and Maple Lodge Farms.

Each year, many people undertake the hike while remembering friends and family members who were residents at Bethell Hospice.

There is no cost to register for this year's hike, though hikers are encouraged to pre-register at hikeforbethellhospice.ca and gather pledges of support by fundraising.

Stronach said Bethell Hospice is the only residential hospice serving Caledon, Brampton, and Dufferin County. She shared it also provides community programs like support groups, one-on-one counselling, art and music therapy and more.

Stronach said the BHF wants to give thanks to the many platinum-level sponsors supporting the hike: Access Storage; Benson Steel; Brampton Funeral Home & Cemetery/Scott Funeral Home ? Brampton Chapel; Egan Funeral Home; Fines Ford Lincoln; Meadowvale Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Centres; Rotary Club of Brampton; and the Town of Caledon.

There are many Gold, Silver, Bronze, matching gift and route sponsors supporting the hike, too.

Last year, the hike raised over \$224,000 and over 400 people participated in it. The BHF hopes to break both of those records this year, and the community is well on track as enthusiastic hike participants have so far raised nearly \$145,000.