

Hike for Bethell Hospice raises over \$245,000

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The Hike for Bethell Hospice was once again a massive fundraising success.

On May 5, well over 400 hikers gathered at the Lloyd Wilson Centennial Arena in Inglewood for the hike, which is held annually during National Hospice Palliative Care Week. Between hikers, the donors that supported them, and hike sponsors, over \$245,000 was raised for the Bethell Hospice Foundation as a result of the hike.

This total was shared in a June 5 media release from Kelly Stronach, Bethell Hospice Foundation senior manager of marketing and communications. She said the foundation is truly humbled by the support of hikers, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and student participants.

"The community has been incredibly supportive, and we are very appreciative," said Stronach.

Some of the highlights of this year's hike included a memory board of heart stickers dedicated to hikers' loved ones; a barbeque lunch prepared by the Rotary Club of Palgrave; an art station where hikers could design vellum butterflies; and a planting station where participants could plant a wildflower in memory of a loved one.

The hike itself was five kilometres in length and saw hikers walk the Caledon Trailway.

In recent years, Caledon's public elementary schools have been getting involved with the Hike for Bethell Hospice, hosting their own hikes.

"Through the efforts of 5,400 students, parents, and staff, the student hike raised an amazing \$22,000," said Stronach, adding that Bethell Hospice is proud to offer children and youth grief counselling services and music and art therapy for children.

Adrian Horwood and Bonnie Klaassen, co-chairs of the Bethell Hospice Foundation, delivered a speech at the hike together.

"Each of you here today is aware of how vital the services of Bethell Hospice are to our community," they said. "Many of you have experienced those feelings firsthand, and each of you has cared enough to come forward today, to ensure that Bethell Hospice services will be here for the next families in need. Thank you so much for your belief in the importance of Bethell Hospice in our community."

All services at Bethell Hospice are free, and in order to keep them free, the Bethell Hospice Foundation must raise \$1.7 million each year. Bethell Hospice is the only hospice residence serving Caledon, Brampton and Dufferin County.

Stronach said she wanted to thank the 2024 hike's platinum sponsors: Access Storage, Benson Steel Limited, Brampton Funeral Home and Cemetery, Brampton Rotary Club, Egan Funeral Home, Fines Ford Lincoln, Meadowvale Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Centres, and the Town of Caledon.

The hike also had numerous gold, silver, bronze and route sponsors.

The Bethell Hospice Foundation is encouraging those interested in getting involved with next year's hike to mark their calendars: May 4, 2025 will be the 15th Hike for Bethell Hospice.