

'Shake, Rattle and Roar' to be theme of Headwaters hospital's 20th Gala

By Mike Pickford

Preparations are complete and the countdown is on as the Headwaters Health Care Foundation (HHCF) gets ready to roll out the red carpet in celebration of the hospital's 20th birthday.

Since 1997, when the facility opened its doors on a site that was until recently in Caledon, the foundation has brought the community together once a year for what has become the Dufferin and Caledon area's 'premiere' annual extravaganza. HHCF will be presenting Shake, Rattle and Roar, its latest offering in a long line of fundraisers designed to benefit Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC), May 6.

HHCF's Annual Giving manager Nicole Hand recently said she was incredibly excited to celebrate such a momentous milestone in 'appropriate' style.

'Every year we like to pick out a theme and have some fun putting together what is a highlight event in Dufferin County,' Hand said. 'This year, we knew we were going to be celebrating our 20th birthday so we decided we wanted to celebrate in style '20s style.'

'I think the best way to explain it would be to say the event is going to be a bit of a cross-section between a sort of speak-easy, secret get-together and The Great Gatsby, and really covering everything else in between,' she added. 'We're going to have games, auctions and live, '20s style entertainment. It's going to be a nice little nod to our special birthday and will give the community the chance to embrace the '20s style and have some fun while doing so.'

Held for the fourth straight year at Hockley Valley Resort, the evening will kick off with an oyster bar and different games in a reception tent at 5:30 p.m., where guests will also have the opportunity to pose for the paparazzi in a complimentary photo shoot. Official welcomes and opening remarks will be presented by the evening's returning Master of Ceremonies Scott Finlay at 7 p.m., with dinner served at 7:30. There will be a silent auction ongoing through the night and a special live auction beginning at 9 p.m. The evening will conclude with a dance, an announcement of the Best Dressed couple and numerous raffle draws.

'The Headwaters Health Care Foundation gala is an amazing event,' Chief of Staff Dr. Somaiah Ahmed declared. 'Not only does it raise an incredible amount towards the purchase of essential equipment for Headwaters, but it's also a chance to dress up, have a great night and meet so many generous people who care about our hospital and help us to continue to provide exceptional care to our patients.'

After seeing an unprecedented net total of \$287,000 raised at last year's Get Down and Derby gala, and more than \$1 million raised since 2013, Hand is hoping to push the boundaries even further this year. With a wide variety of medical tools and equipment on the hospital's shopping list in 2017, she noted the foundation is 'shooting for the stars' this time around, setting a goal of \$300,000. 'We had a very special year last year when we blew it out of the water with \$287,000 raised, and as awesome and fantastic as that was, I think we're hoping to get a little closer to that \$300,000 mark this year,' Hand said. 'It would be nice to celebrate our 20th anniversary with such a big milestone.'

The money raised through this year's event is expected to flow throughout the hospital as staff attempts to replace aging equipment in various departments. The facility's IT department is expected to receive a \$100,000 facelift, while this year's primary focus is centred around giving the ER a full makeover. Through its popular field hospital, which gives gala attendees the opportunity to either pay for 'shares' in hospital equipment or choose to buy them outright, Hand is hoping to raise enough money to purchase brand new vital signs monitors (\$4,000 each), specialized stretchers (\$5,500 each), a state-of-the-art medication cart (\$2,500), overbed tables (\$500 each) and fluid and blood warmers (\$3,600 each).

This year's big ticket item is an electrosurgical unit, an essential piece of equipment for the operating room that enables surgeons to make precise incisions during multiple procedures. The machine helps to minimize blood loss for patients going under the knife and comes in at a cost of \$37,500. Hand noted the foundation would be looking to sell 25 shares at a cost of \$1,500 each on the night. She has also set a fundraising goal of roughly \$75,000 to go toward the replacement of all 11 defibrillators the facility currently has. Facing a cost of \$20,000 each, she hopes to be able to pay for 'four or five' new defibrillators once all is said and done.

Now set to enter its third decade, the annual hospital gala is 'absolutely essential' to ensuring the facility has what it needs to provide the best care possible to the community. Having helped put this year's event together, chair of the organizing committee Jennifer Conroy paid homage to the community for helping to make the annual extravaganza everything it is today.

'When this event began I'm sure the first organizing committee could never have imagined that 20 years later this single-evening event would still be going strong,' Conroy said. 'Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, donors, volunteers and our guests, we continue to help Headwaters provide the best possible health care for our families, friends and neighbours close to home.'

Hand is just looking forward to a night she knows is going to live long in the memory for all of those in attendance.

“We've got so many cool live auction items up for grabs, there's over 115 silent auction items for people to bid on. There's going to be excellent entertainment, an amazing meal and the opportunity to rub shoulders with some of the most prominent men and women in the community,” Hand said. “While I already know it's going to be a ton of fun, the most important thing in my eyes is knowing that it's all going towards something important.”

“When you raise almost \$300,000 of a \$2 million budget in a single night, you're able to see pretty clearly where that money is going to go,” she added. “You can actually see the pieces of equipment that are going to be purchased. It warms my heart knowing that this celebration is going to enable babies to be cared for more safely because they'll have the infant warmer they need, or that we won't have to put off surgeries because we now have access to an electrosurgical unit. It's things like that that really make the difference.”

“Through this gala, you can immediately see money translated into improved service and patient care. It's a special, special thing and I'm so proud to say I live in a community that goes above and beyond each and every year to ensure our hospital is fitted with all the specialist equipment it needs,” she concluded.