

Southlake Run offers flexibility in supporting healthcare

By Brock Weir

Since the start of the global pandemic, every day has been a marathon all its own for the doctors, nurses and staff at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

With a third wave and a third lockdown, support for the local hospital is needed now more than ever through the Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake Virtual Challenge.

The virtual Run for Southlake kicks off this Monday, April 12, running for four weeks.

This year's challenge is divided into sections for each of the four weeks.

The first week, Eat Well with Southlake, focuses on nutrition with professionals from Nature's Emporium providing programming on 'foods that fuel you' while participants will be encouraged to set their own nutritional goal for the week.

The second, Make it a Habit with Southlake, builds on the lessons from the first week with a focus on 'how often you want to move this week' working on 'your long-term health by making fitness a consistent part of your routine.'

'What the [sessions] are doing is reflecting on how this experience is a journey, a process, and that is where nutrition flows into consistency,' says Melanie Osmond of the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation. 'We start with getting our energy and our nutrition on track before we look into being consistent. On our first day [of this segment] we have a session with the Sports Medicine Centre of Excellence (in Newmarket) where they are talking about activity-related injuries and prevention, running a session on how to make sure you're safe when you're getting back into exercise.'

In addition to underscoring the staples of stretches and cooldowns, it is also about making sure 'you're not going too hard too fast.'

'Our second week will make sure the education is there, that people aren't looking to move mountains until they are ready to do so,' says Ms. Osmond, noting the third week will have a focus on building endurance, setting fitness goals on what fits your schedule best. 'We're looking at that end goal of fitness. Sometimes if you're running a marathon, they start by moving often and going for an hour at a time before looking at how far can I go? It is that sort of journey, but we're also looking at a comparison.'

'Southlake is here every day; we are here for you as a hospital, as your community health care system, and we are there to support you when you need us. We're hoping that by spending time with us, that is a mindful time you're giving back and are able to reflect back on that experience; that is time that Southlake is open and available and building up that endurance is something our hospital had to do that entire past year' while ramping up with a growing community as well.'

Participants can register for the 2021 Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake Virtual Challenge through the second week of the initiative. To date, more than \$45,000 has been raised towards the Southlake Foundation's goal of \$175,000.

For more information, including registration and sponsorship, visit runforsouthlake.ca.