

## Vince's presents cheque to Southlake Foundation, announces 2022 Community Product Initiative recipient

**By Neil Moore**

Representatives from Vince's and from the Southlake Foundation assembled for a brief, socially-distanced presentation at the Sharon store on Thursday.

There, proceeds from the 2021 Community Product Initiative were released after a successful year-long campaign, and the independent grocer was pleased to announce that \$25,812.61 was raised to support the Mental Health Program at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Southlake Foundation's Better Begins Today campaign is a \$7.5 million campaign to support the surging demand for treatment that will be addressed with a newly built Emergent Mental Health Assessment Unit and a new 12-bed Adult Inpatient Unit, along with other site improvements.

Southlake's mental health spaces are smaller than today's standards, overcrowded and lacking basic necessities to promote healing and recovery. The exceptional mental health care at Southlake requires an urgent investment to create specialized assessment facilities, greater inpatient capacity and enhanced privacy.

The good news is that \$6.5 million has been raised to date (86% of the target), with support from individuals and businesses like Vince's helping make such lofty goals a reality.

"Thanks to Vince's Market 2021 Community Product Initiative, Southlake Foundation is closer than ever to achieving the \$7.5 million goal of our Mental Health campaign," said Jennifer Ritter, President and CEO, Southlake Foundation. "We are deeply grateful to Vince's Market, its committed employees and generous customers for recognizing the importance of elevating mental health care for Southlake's communities."

"We are thrilled with the amount raised in 2021, and with the success of this program as we enter our fifth year thanks to our customers, staff and vendors," said Giancarlo Trimarchi, partner at Vince's. "The Community Product Initiative has so far raised approximately \$83K over the past four years, and we expect continued, strong support in 2022."

Vince's is also pleased to announce the 2022 recipient of the Community Product Initiative: Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region and South Simcoe. Vince's takes very seriously the mental health challenges that affect so many Canadians in particular young Canadians, who face a suicide rate that is the third highest in the industrialized world.

"Even before the pandemic, Canadian youth were experiencing a mental health crisis, marked by high rates of depression, eating disorders, suicide and obstacles in accessing youth-specific mental health services," says Rebecca Shields, CEO Canadian Mental Health Association, York and South Simcoe. "The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, isolation and disruption of school, workplaces and social recreation are exacerbating this mental health crisis. We are grateful for this year-long partnership with Vince's Market, which is raising much needed funds to support MOBYSS and increase awareness within our community about this unique and lifesaving service for youth."

Since 2015, CMHA YRSS has been tackling the loss of young lives to mental illness, addiction and suicide through MOBYSS (Mobile York South Simcoe), Ontario's first and only, mobile walk-in health clinic for youth aged 12-25 years.