

Winchester Heelers on the move for hospital

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WINCHESTER

The Winchester and District Memorial Hospital has been the recipient of an amazing array of community generosity, but the recent contribution of the group called the Winchester Hospital Heelers is remarkable in itself.

The group's achievements were officially recognized by the hospital at a reception recently at the hospital.

The Heelers have walked in the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation's Weekend to End Breast Cancer for the past three years. Two of those members walked in the very first event four years ago, which is how the team got started.

They walked 60 kilometres, up Bank Street to the centre of Ottawa, getting blisters, losing toenails, and feeling strong. Last year, the Heelers were the Walk's number one fund-raising team, raising \$153,000.

Over the last three years, the group has raised over \$270,000. The Ottawa Regional

Cancer Foundation has contributed a large portion of these funds back to WDMH, which hospital CEO Trudy Reid said is one of the reasons local residents are willing to give so much. "It goes back into their own community."

At the reception, Linda Eagen, President and CEO of the ORCF, presented a cheque back to the hospital for the incredible amount of \$116,110.75. These funds have all been put towards payment of the new digital mammography machine, which cost \$500,000. WDMH is the first hospital in the region to have digital mammography and it is directly attributable to the Heelers.

Dr. Mark Schweitzer, Harvard-trained radiologist at WDMH, told the Heelers the hospital is as well-equipped as any hospital in the world. He also said that he came to Canada because he saw people dying in the system he came from, and he believes in a system of fairness, where everyone is entitled to high-quality health care. He said, "As a community you can be justifiably proud. In a TV sitcom or doctor show there would not be a better radiography unit. Every one of you has done something that will touch 5, 10, 15, 20 individuals. This is the type of place I want to be."

Eagen added, "The World Health Organization says we currently have the knowledge to cut the incidence of cancer by half and to increase survival of those people by 50 per cent. It's everyone's responsibility to be active in that. I hope you know how important you are in the battle for saving lives."

Christine Enright, breast cancer survivor and Heeler, spoke of her experience. She said, "I was fortunate beyond belief that after my surgery I could come here for chemo. I cannot say how helpful it was to walk

home after chemo, and to be able to ask questions of these people who are also my friends and neighbours."

A plaque, which will be placed in the diagnostic imaging department of the hospital, was presented to the Heelers. Trudy Reid, always a champion of the rural community, said, "It's all about access to the best. Rural communities have access challenges, and older, poorer populations who die earlier. And there is no bus system. In my career I have witnessed women making choices for radical surgery (complete breast removal) just because they didn't have access to further services. Here we have the best breast cancer screening equipment, the best staff, the best radiologist to read those scans, and the best breast cancer treatment available."

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, one in nine women is expected to develop breast cancer during her lifetime and one in 28 will die of it. In 2009 approximately 22,700 women will be diagnosed; 5,400 will die. It is not just a women's disease, either. An estimated 180 men will be diagnosed and 50 will die of it. But there is good news, too. Breast cancer death rates have declined in every age group since the mid-1990s.



Photo Candice Vetter

Shirley Rose, Trudy Reid and Christine Enright display the plaque presented to the Winchester Hospital Heelers.

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