

10th annual Hike for Hospice fundraiser coming on May 6



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With old man winter hopefully on his way out, the community's primary palliative care provider is gearing up for its biggest fundraiser of the year. Hospice Dufferin has provided support and assistance to thousands of families dealing with a life-changing diagnosis. Each and every year, the local not-for-profit reaches out to the community for help in the shape of its 'Hike for Hospice' fun run and barbecue. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the hike serves as the main fundraiser for an organization that is there 365 days a year for our region's most vulnerable people. 'The hike is coming up once again and, of course, that means we're starting to get out there in the community and make people aware,' Maureen Riedler, Hospice Dufferin's Executive Director, said. 'It's such a big event for us. Because of our fantastic community we always bring in at least \$10,000, which goes an incredibly long way for an organization responsible for fundraising 75 percent of its budget.' Ms. Riedler will be hoping for something of a rebound this time around, with last year's event largely ruined because of bad weather. Taking place at Monora Park on Sunday, May 6, the event will feature three different walk routes - one kilometre, three kilometre and five kilometre options - with a barbecue and a clutch of other family-friendly activities planned. 'We want this day to be something that families across Dufferin County can be excited to attend, whether they're familiar with Hospice Dufferin and its services or not,' Ms. Riedler said. 'We're going to have face painting, we'll have the parachutes out, hula hoops, lawn games? It will be just like an old fashioned picnic that everyone can enjoy.' Also planned is a special scavenger hunt in the park, which Ms. Riedler noted is always a huge hit with the kids. Hospice Dufferin, classified as a visiting hospice, offers a wealth of programs and support mechanisms for people suffering with an illness, regardless of what stage there are. The organization typically serves over 400 families each year - working primarily out of its main hub inside the Edelbrock Centre in Orangeville. Hospice Dufferin also conducts home visits, Ms. Riedler said. Having raised \$14,000 through last year's hike, the organization is hoping to breach the \$20,000 mark in 2018. That goal appears manageable when you consider the fact that Sara Rose, a longterm post-secondary intern and summer employee with Hospice Dufferin, is bringing her Hope Through Harmonies fundraiser back for a second successive year. Last year's inaugural event was a huge success, with more

than 100 local residents cramming into Fionn MacCools to support the initiative. Such was the success of the concert, the event will take place at Black Wolf Smokehouse this year in an attempt to accommodate more people. "Last year's event was just an overwhelming experience. We went into the night a little nervous, not exactly sure what we were going to be able to do, but in the end we managed to raise over \$2,300 for Hospice Dufferin, which is fantastic," Ms. Rose said. "We're looking forward to getting back out there again this year and, hopefully, doing even better." Sara will be joined on stage by local group The Campfire Poets, with talented singer-songwriter Sarah Pearson also making the trip up from Kitchener to perform. Tickets to the event are \$20 and can be purchased at Hospice Dufferin or Black Wolf Smokehouse. All money raised through the two events will go towards funding Hospice Dufferin's day program. "Both events are going to be a whole lot of fun. We really can't wait to hopefully the community shares in our enthusiasm and can help make Hope Through Harmonies and Hike for Hospice our big success stories of 2018." For more information, visit www.hospicedufferin.com.