

Headwaters hospital ?a best kept secret? says new HHCF executive



By Mike Baker

When Dora Boylen-Pabst first walked through the doors at Headwaters Health Care Centre back in December, she realized, instantly, what a special place she would be working in.

As the new executive director of the Headwaters Health Care Foundation, replacing the recently retired Joan Burdette, Ms. Boylen-Pabst is tasked with guiding the organization into a new era. It's one she isn't taking lightly.

Officially beginning in her role on Dec. 17, Ms. Boylen-Pabst has had the better part of seven weeks to acclimatize and familiarize herself with her new surroundings. That adjustment period has been helped by the fact that Dora considers herself a resident of the Headwaters region. Residing in Schomberg, the career fundraiser says she's treating this new position as something of a homecoming.

?I'm very excited to be here. I've always called Headwaters (Health Care Centre) one of the province's best-kept secrets. Now, to be a part of it, it's a fantastic opportunity,? Ms. Boylen-Pabst told the Citizen.

As the primary fundraiser for our local hospital, she says the work undertaken at the foundation level cannot be understated. Each and every year, the organization raises and then donates millions of dollars to the facility to ensure HHCC continues to meet the needs of the community and remain at the forefront of the health care sector.

With 22 years' experience in fundraising, the last 11 of which spread across stints as vice-president of Newmarket's Southlake Regional Health Care Foundation and vice-president of the North York General Foundation, Ms. Boylen-Pabst has a lot of experience in the industry. Now, she hopes to use that to take HHCF to the next level.

?One of the reasons I was so anxious to work here is because there's a sense of giving back where you work and where you live. I find people are more emotionally invested in what they are doing and care about outcomes a little more deeply when it impacts not just an entire community, but family and friends too,? Dora said. ?From a culture perspective and feeling I've had when I've been in the building before and experienced care here, it's a phenomenal hospital. There are a lot of things I want to nurture and continue to grow.?

While it is the foundation's job to assist the hospital in improving any and all aspects of service, Dora also wants to make the community aware of the ?fabulous? programs in place at the local facility.

?There are certain programs in this hospital, for example the chemotherapy unit, that people just aren't aware of,? Ms. Boylen-Pabst

said. "I was surprised by the quality of care and some of the state-of-the-art equipment, and type of procedures being carried out here."

She added, "I think people consider HHCC their local hospital without truly understanding there is excellence here too. What I want to achieve is not only growth in fundraising dollars, but growth in the brand. I want to raise awareness of what you can come here for and what you should come here for. The compassion and culture I've seen here make this facility truly unique."

The year 2019 is an important one for both the foundation and the hospital. Each organization will be working on and unveiling a five-year strategic plan. The process for that at the foundation will begin in the fall.

"We will work with the hospital to determine their needs and their growth plans over the next five to ten years," she said. "The time frame of implementation will be five years, but the plan will be based upon a much longer-term vision."

With two months to go in its current fiscal year, the foundation is still raising money to purchase equipment on the hospital's 2018 wish list. To date this fiscal year, the foundation has raised just over \$2.3 million.

When asked what was most exciting about this new position, Ms. Boylen-Pabst says she is simply looking forward to the journey ahead.

"Getting to know the community is a big one. Every day I'm meeting new people, whether it's here at the hospital or out in the community," she said. "I am looking forward to starting a journey in a year that is so clearly a planning year. We will still be raising lots of money, supporting the hospital as we always do, but we'll also be focusing on the future. Really being able to take in all the elements and build a clear path, while at the same time experiencing it is something I'm very much looking forward to."