

'Shake, Rattle and Roar' raises \$308,000 for local hospital



By Mike Pickford

Almost 400 local residents were swept off their feet recently when the Headwaters Health Care Foundation (HHCF) outdid itself once again in staging its milestone 20th anniversary hospital gala.

Transforming Hockley Valley Resort into a secret, 1920s gangster-themed hideaway on May 6, event organizers went the extra mile this year for its landmark 'Shake, Rattle and Roar' fundraising celebration and it paid off in a big way - raising a jaw-dropping \$308,318 for the Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC).

In confirming the final, net total in an interview with the Citizen on Monday, HHCF's Annual Giving Manager Nicole Hand found herself a little lost for words when trying to explain exactly what that money means to the local hospital, thanking all 392 guests in attendance for helping to make this year's gala 'the best in recent memory.'

'Heading into these celebrations we always seem to set ourselves really lofty goals and our aim this year was to get close to that \$300,000 mark, so to surpass it is just unbelievable,' Ms. Hand said. 'Our wonderful community seems to raise the bar each and every year and we're just thrilled to be able to sit here today and say they did it again.'

The money raised through this year's event is expected to flow throughout the entire hospital, with Ms. Hand stating every department would benefit from this latest windfall. While one of the chief priorities will be to replace aging equipment in various units across the hospital, the primary focus of the 2017 gala, according to Ms. Hand, was to ensure the ER receives a much-needed makeover. Expected upgrades include brand new vital sign monitors, specialized stretchers, a state of the art medication cart, overbed tables and fluid and blood warmers.

'Those items were all a part of our 'Field Hospital', where we give our guests the opportunity to purchase shares in a specific item, or simply buy them outright. We're pleased to say that every single piece listed had at least one share bought, and that includes our electrosurgical unit,' Ms. Hand said.

Expected to set the hospital back a cool \$37,500, the electrosurgical unit is an essential piece of equipment used in the operating room that enables surgeons to make precise incisions during surgery. The machine helps to minimize blood loss for patients going under the knife. The facility also raised a significant chunk of change to go towards replacing all 11 defibrillators currently in service at the site.

'Super cool story about the defibrillators? We had an anonymous donor come to us before the gala and say that while he was unable to attend, he'd like to buy a new defibrillator for us. They cost just over \$20,000,' Ms. Hand said. 'So with one new defibrillator secured, we challenged guests on the night to help us out and see if we can raise enough to buy one or two more? By the end, we had collected \$148,000, which allows us to buy another seven defibrillators, so it's fair to say they conquered that challenge.'

In what was her first experience of a Headwaters hospital gala, the facility's new President and CEO Stacey Daub said she was blown away by the level of support shown by the local community.

'Although this was my first time attending a Headwaters Health Care Foundation gala, I was very humbled by the incredible generosity shown throughout the evening,' Ms. Daub said. 'It was so inspiring to see first-hand how this community comes together in its commitment and support, and why it is the heart and soul of Headwaters Health Care Centre.'

Orangeville Mayor Jeremy Williams was just one of many local dignitaries in attendance that evening and he echoed the words of Ms. Daub, stating the annual gala is a fitting reminder of just how special this community is.

‘Quite often I’m left speechless by the results of our hospital gala,’ Mayor Williams said. ‘When you’re there in person and you see some of the bids flying in on some of these items and some of the donations made, they’re typically five figure sums. It’s just amazing to see.’

He added, ‘The level of generosity in our community is really quite impressive and it never fails to amaze me. We have some good people in this community.’

As the curtain closes on another hospital gala in Dufferin County, Ms. Hand noted there would be little time for the ‘amazing’ organizing committee to rest, as they’re already planning to meet and make arrangements for next year’s celebration.

‘The committee is meeting next week to review this year’s amazing gathering, while they will also be naming next year’s gala so the ball is definitely rolling,’ Ms. Hand said. ‘A lot of people made the comment this year that ‘Shake, Rattle and Roar’ was the best gala yet and they asked how we were planning to top it next year? All I could say was ‘I don’t know yet, but we will.’

And now having had a little time to reflect herself, Ms. Hand added that it was a ‘special feeling’ knowing just how much support there is throughout the community for the local hospital.

‘You don’t know until you’ve worked or lived here just how special a place this hospital is to work and how wonderful an area the Headwaters region is to live. These galas, while they do serve to improve services at our hospital, truly do benefit everyone living in our community,’ Ms. Hand said. ‘Because we’re able to buy the best equipment, we’re able to attract the best medical care professionals out there and when the community knows we have the best medical staff possible, they have confidence coming here.’ She concluded, ‘It all goes back to that idea of bringing quality care closer to home’ that’s the reason we all do what we do here at the Headwaters Health Care Foundation and the Headwaters Health Care Centre.’