

Back the Cat committee only \$300K away from fundraising goal



By Chris Drost

Through the generosity of municipalities, businesses, Choices, the North Hastings Hospital Auxiliary, and others, \$2.2 million has been raised out of a total goal of \$2.5 million for a CT scanner for the Bancroft hospital.

It was standing room only on the afternoon of April 24 when approximately one hundred community members, Quinte Health Care staff, donors, volunteers, political representatives, and members of the Fund Development Committee gathered in the Corner Café at the Bancroft hospital for the much-anticipated announcement.

“This has taken hours of teamwork and the support of a community,” said Kim Bishop, chair of the North Hastings Fund Development Committee. She remembered how at the outset of the campaign she at first wondered how they could reach such an ambitious goal. “Then I reflected on our community and its generosity. After accepting the first gift on Dec. 1, 2022, I am thrilled to announce the start of the community phase of the fundraiser with \$2.2 million already raised,” she said.

“One thing we should not have to compromise on living in a rural community, is access to primary health care close to home. We will always be ‘the little hospital that could.’ Quite simply, this is going to save lives. With the support of the Quinte Health Board and the Senior Leadership Team, as well as the Ministry of Health, we are finally able to move forward in providing our resident and visitors with the best of care close to home,” explained Bishop.

Bishop continued by thanking the other members of the fund development team, Tammy Davis, Tom Malloy, David MacLeod, Sharon Oram, Debbie Speck and members of the Back the Cat team, Dr. Christensen, Phyllis Till, Sarah Lawrence, Cathey Levia, Leslie Cox, and Britney Rowden.

MP Ric Bresee was unable to attend the event as the provincial legislature is sitting. He did send a message that read, “On behalf of the Government and I, as your MPP, we are pleased to have approved the new CT scan for Quinte Health North Hastings Hospital. This equipment will transform the care we are able to provide to the patients of the North Hastings community. You will be able to offer even better care with this equipment. Not only will you be saving lives, but you will have an even more desirable tool that will help recruit more physicians for the patients of this and the surrounding communities. I look forward to attending the ribbon cutting for this exciting project.”

Stacey Daub, president and CEO, Quinte Health took to the podium where she described her second day on the job. She received emails from Tammy Davis and Kim Bishop expressing the need for a CT scanner at the Bancroft hospital. “Usually, this kind of thing takes a long time, but we are here today making this announcement because of community champions. Tammy Davis and Kim Bishop have been relentless in trying to make this a better place,” said Daub.

Tammy Davis, North Hastings hospital lead and manager of Patient Services, came to the podium carrying what she describes as "my famous map." This is the map that made the case for locating a CT scanner in Bancroft. "I want to recognize two people. When I first started here 15 years ago, Peter McEnery gave me a letter signed by all the physicians here about the need for a CT scanner. He said he would do whatever it would take. I am proud to say on this day that it has come true. I also want to recognize Dale Hughey from Boulter in Carlow Mayo, a 50-year-old who did everything he could to support efforts to get a CT scanner in Bancroft. At one point during the illness he eventually took his life, he had to make trips to Peterborough for a CT scan every 16 weeks. "His family is here today, and I know Dale is here in spirit," said Davis.

"To our donors, it is because of you our patients will receive better care. Those with undiagnosed issues will not have to endure a 120 km trip each way. Because of you, those who have chosen not to have a test for financial reasons or because accessing the test is too difficult, will be able to have the test," added Davis.

"This will help decrease patients stays in hospital and will help in staffing and recruitment," explained Dr. Keila. When a patient is transferred out of town for a CT scan, it requires an ambulance driver and a nurse, taking lots of staff hours. "This is a win for us. Thank you," he said.

"What a great day for Bancroft and all North Hastings. This is very much appreciated and is vital. It will pay great dividends in the long run. Thank you. Onward and upward," said Mayor Paul Jenkins of Bancroft.

Bishop returned to the podium where she made special mention of some of the major donors in the campaign so far. They included the North Hastings Hospital Auxiliary, Choices, Town of Bancroft, Municipality of Hastings Highlands, Boyer Family Charitable Fund, Barry Martin and Freymond Lumber. Then she noted that each year the fund development committee meets with a particular group, Faraday Township. Faraday has been giving \$20,000 each year on an ongoing basis towards the repair of hospital equipment. "We told them last fall we were finally ready to talk about the CT scanner. These people get it. They understand rural health care and the role they can take. By noon of that day, we accepted a donation of \$500,000 from Faraday Township and they renewed their \$20,000 ongoing commitment for equipment repairs. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you," exclaimed Bishop.

Mayor Dennis Purcell was invited to step forward. "This is the greatest community in Ontario. Thank you," he said.

Bishop concluded the presentation with a call to action to year-round residents and seasonal residents. "Every cent matters. Whether it is five dollars, 50 or 1,000. Spread the word," she said. A total of \$300,000 still needs to be raised from the community.

Donations can be dropped off at the hospital where a charitable receipt can immediately be obtained or can be e-transferred to qhc.nh.fund.dev@gmail.com. A charitable receipt will be sent by email.