

NHDHA launches Catch the Ace fundraiser



By Nate Smelle

On June 6 the North Hastings District Hospital Auxiliary launched an exciting new fundraising initiative?Catch the Ace?to support a vital cause: raising funds to purchase two new ventilators for the Bancroft Hospital. Following the success of their recent campaign that raised \$300,000 for the installation of a CT Scanner in January 2024, the Auxiliary continues to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to enhancing health-care services in the North Hastings region.

The NHDHA has long played a critical role in supporting hospital services in the Bancroft area. With a strong record of organizing impactful fundraising campaigns, the auxiliary ensures that local patients benefit from state-of-the-art medical equipment. This year's focus?raising funds for life-saving ventilators?is especially timely and vital to ensuring high-quality care for those in respiratory distress or critical care situations.

While this is the first time that the NHDHA has hosted a Catch the Ace fundraiser, president Donna Federov said they have been in touch with other community groups who have organized such an initiative to gain insight into how to make it a success. For example, the St. Francis Valley Healthcare Foundation?one of the organization's Federov spoke with?raised more than \$636,000 last year for equipment at the St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay. For those who are unfamiliar with these type of fundraising campaigns, she said a Catch the Ace is a progressive lottery that blends chance, strategy, and community spirit.

Explaining how the contest works, Federov said first a standard deck of 52 playing cards is sealed in numbered envelopes and stored securely. For the price of \$10 each, participants are able to buy tickets and select an envelope number from the list of remaining options. Starting on June 26, each Thursday at 3 p.m., one ticket will be randomly drawn at the Corner Café in Bancroft. The envelope number on the ticket is then opened. If the envelope does contain the Ace of Spades, the lucky ticket holder wins both the weekly prize and the entire progressive jackpot?30 per cent of ticket sales from every week since the raffle began. If the card inside is not the Ace of Spades, she said the winner receives 20 per cent of that week's ticket sales. The card is then destroyed and removed from future draws, and the game then continues the following week.

Tickets can be purchased at various locations across the North Hastings region. In Bancroft they can be found at: Bird's Creek Farm Supply; Corner Café; Makin' Waves Marine; McG's Cakes; New To You; Royal Canadian Legion; Shoppers Drug Mart; Stedman's; Tammy's Family Hair Care; and York River Meats. Tickets are also available in Maynooth at Linkie's General Store and Woods Gas Bar; and, in McArthurs Mills at Cunningham's General Store. Federov said tickets can also be purchased online at: <https://nhcatchtheace.ca>, provided the buyer is physically in Ontario at the time of purchase. Online and in-person ticket sales for each draw close Thursday morning, with a new series of tickets becoming available by 5 p.m. that day.

The NHDHA ensures full transparency and fairness throughout the Catch the Ace raffle. All draws are video recorded, and strict rules are in place to ensure compliance with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. Participants must be 18 years or older and located in Ontario at the time of purchase. Weekly draws are conducted by designated board members, and safeguards exist to maintain the integrity of envelope selection.

Winners are contacted directly by phone and do not need to be present at the draw to win. All prizes are paid by cheque in Canadian funds, and winners must provide valid identification. Each ticket sold supports not only the weekly prize pool and jackpot, but most importantly, the North Hastings Hospital Fund Development Committee, which receives 50 per cent of weekly ticket sales. These funds will directly go toward the purchase of two new ventilators?essential equipment that can mean the difference between life and death in emergency and ICU situations.

?I didn't realize the government didn't pay for hospital equipment until I started with the auxiliary,? said Federov. ?I thought, wow, it doesn't seem right, but that's the way it is. That's why a lot of hospitals have their own foundation with a salary staff and everything that helps to do the fundraising.?

The Catch the Ace fundraiser is more than a lottery, Federov said, it's an opportunity for community members to come together and support a cause that touches the lives of friends, families, and neighbours. With every ticket purchased, supporters are helping ensure that Bancroft Hospital remains equipped to deliver exceptional care in critical moments.

Weekly draw results and jackpot updates are posted on the official Catch the Ace website <https://nhcatchtheace.ca>; and on the NHDHA Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/NHDHABancroft.

Acknowledging that the auxilliary is always looking for new volunteers, Federov said anyone interested in getting involved can reach out online, or by dropping in at New To You or the Corner Café.