

FIELD OF DREAMS BECOMES REALITY

BY DANIELLE BREAULT

Nearly 200 dignitaries, doctors, nurses, campaign donors, volunteers and guests held their collective breath as a giant crane lowered the region's new

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine through the roof of the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre last month. The crowd erupted in cheers as this critical piece of equipment was successfully set down inside the building – the latest in a string of successes for the Windsor & Essex County Cancer Centre Foundation.

The Field of Dreams Campaign was launched in September of 2004 to raise \$3.5 million for the purchase of a state-of-the-art MRI machine and to fund the construction of an MRI suite within the Regional Cancer Centre. Until now, the only MRI in this area was located at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital, running at its maximum capacity of about 6,000 scans per year. Cancer patients requiring a scan had to be transferred, tying up valuable resources in the process and possibly resulting in delays in diagnosis and treatment.

An MRI scan uses a non-invasive machine to produce three dimensional images of body structures using powerful magnets, radio waves and computer technology instead of X-rays. Some of the benefits of an MRI scan as it relates to cancer treatments include earlier diagnosis, more accurate treatment planning and more reliable followup of the patient's progress – all aimed at improving survival rates. The arrival of this machine means that the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre will offer the first Integrated Cancer

Program in Ontario to have a diagnostic MRI unit dedicated exclusively to the care of oncology patients. Last year, more than 57,500 patient visits were conducted at the Cancer Centre.

“Once again, our community rose to the challenge,” exclaimed lawyer Peter Hrastovec, who served as the Campaign Chair for this initiative. He was elated to celebrate the successful conclusion of this campaign. “We began with a target of \$3.5 million. Quotes for construction came in higher than expected. The goal was increased to \$3.9 million to cover ▶



Top left: The Field of Dreams sculpture recognizes the many donors to the fundraising campaign.

Left: The newly purchased MRI is lowered through the roof of the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre.

this expense, and also to purchase additional equipment to enable the scanning of small children.”

“This community came together and today, we can provide new hope,” said Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis at the celebration.

Mike Raymond, Warden of the County of Essex, also lauded the campaign’s success. “Health care has no boundaries,” he said. “When you need help, you need help. Accessibility to these facilities is so very important.” He was quick to credit the contributions of the nurses of the Cancer Centre. “The staff and nurses are so kind and so caring,” he said. “They worked together and raised \$50,000 for this MRI.” Warden Raymond also expressed his gratitude to Tony Toldo and the Toldo family, who kicked off the MRI Campaign with a donation of \$1 million.

Accolades were very much the order of the day for the Toldo family, which has a long history of generously supporting the Regional Cancer Centre which bears the Toldo name.

“Thank you Tony – you have inspired us to reach this goal,” said Norma Brockenshire, President of the Windsor &

Essex County Cancer Centre Foundation. “In total, since the initiation of the first Dream Weaver campaign to equip the Cancer Centre, the Foundation has raised \$12.2 million dollars, striving always to meet the goal of ensuring that the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre will continue to be the best equipped facility in the province.” She also noted that all of the more than 5,000 donors to the Field of Dreams Campaign would be permanently recognized on the Field of Dreams Sculpture, which was unveiled at the ceremony.

Kay Douglas, President of Douglas Marketing Group, explained the principles of the sculpture’s design. “The Field of Dreams sculpture was designed to represent the strength and energy possible when our community comes together to achieve a goal. The core of the sculpture has been designed to represent a field of energy, a field of life and the cause that the figures have been positioned around.” She went on to describe that the figures show silhouettes representing the people of our community who have joined together to support the campaign. The ball that rests atop the statue represents the achievement of the

campaign goal and the light that shines up through the core of the structure reflects back on the people.

Kay praised Dr. Norm Becker’s significant contributions toward the project. “He donated so much of his own time,” she explained. “We’re artists, and once we came up with the design, we needed to ensure the structural integrity of the piece. Dr. Becker’s name came up as someone who had significant experience with this type of work since he was so integral to the completion of the Rotary Peace Monument in Windsor. We were so blessed to have him on board.”

Kay thanked many other contributors to this beautiful tribute.

“Danielle Myers was key in the design of this sculpture, Peter Anthony Designs generously donated the figures and the centre core of the sculpture, and so many others contributed to the completion of this beautiful piece. The sculpture was really designed to represent the strength and unity when our community comes together,” she concluded.

It is anticipated that construction of the MRI suite will be completed and the machine operational in July of this year. WL

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