

# Headwaters Health Care Foundation hosts 2nd Annual Hike to Fight Cancer

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Headwaters Health Care Foundation held its second annual Hike to Fight Cancer at the Caledon Ski Club last Thursday.

This year's hike raised \$50,000 in support of all forms of cancer care at Headwaters.

K.C. Carruthers, CEO of Headwaters Health Care Foundation, shared that the event is vital as it raises funds for the necessary equipment they need, such as chemotherapy chairs, CT scanners and mammography equipment.

‘It’s a chance for us to come together and make sure that Headwaters Healthcare Center has the diagnostic equipment, cancer treatment equipment, and the tools our surgeons need; the only way to fund those is through fundraising in the community,’ says Carruthers.

Carruthers said they already outgrew their original venue at the inaugural hike and expected more than 200 people this year.

‘Supporting cancer care at Headwaters is supporting the people in our community that need it, and if we don’t do it, nobody else will.’

Headwaters currently treats over 2,000 patients a year who come to their hospital for cancer treatment.

This is in addition to diagnostics, screenings and follow-ups.

The hike offered various routes, varying in length to suit different abilities, ensuring everyone could participate.

Cheryl Santarossa attended the hike with her team of over 30 people of friends and family.

She was diagnosed in June with inflammatory breast cancer and began treatment at Headwaters by the end of the month.

She spoke on the importance of having such a ‘caring’ facility in her own community.

‘I can’t say enough for the care that I’m getting there and all the nurses that are there; it’s just been wonderful.’

Santarossa has undergone thirteen rounds of chemo and has three more to go.

She attended the inaugural hike just last year, and said, ‘who knew that I’d be in the situation I am this year?’

‘I feel very honored and very blessed to have the support I have.’

Terri Holden, a personal trainer, brought many of her clients to participate in the hike with her that day as part of their team, ‘Bust-A-Move.’

One of her clients who was there with her that day came straight from her final 19th radiation treatment.

‘We’re all proud of her,’ says Holden. ‘We’re hoping to keep raising money to build awareness and cure this nasty disease.’

Not only was Holden hiking for her friend, but for her daughter.

Holden's daughter was diagnosed at 34-years-old with breast cancer.

She shares that she's seeing this happening more and more to the younger generation.

"Stay positive if this ever happens to you, and push forward and raise funds so we can try to cure this; it's happening to a lot of young people," says Holden.

Participants gathered around outside the ski club as Carruthers kicked off the hike with opening remarks.

"We all know someone who's close to us who has or is battling cancer, and being able to fight that battle close to home under the care of your community hospital is what today is all about," says Carruthers.

Before the hike, he shared a personal story from someone receiving care at Headwaters Health Care Foundation.

"I knew I needed answers quickly, but what scared me almost as much as the diagnosis itself was the thought of driving hours back and forth to the city for every test, every appointment, and every treatment. Thankfully, I didn't have to. Headwaters, my community hospital, was there for me," said Carruthers, relaying the story.

"Right here, close to my home and family, I was able to get my diagnosis, begin my treatment, and receive the follow-up care I needed, all without leaving the comfort and support of my family and friends, and all surrounded by the award-winning Friendship Gardens that makes Headwaters Health Care Center such a special place for care. Because my care was local, I didn't have to choose between fighting cancer and being present in my own life. I could go to treatment in the morning and still be home for dinner that night."

"Local cancer care isn't just about convenience. It gave me dignity, hope, and the strength to heal surrounded by my community."