

Muzzo, De Gasperis families make record donation to hospital

By Mark Pavilons

Two development powerhouses have teamed up to make the largest contribution ever to the Mackenzie Health. The \$15-million joint gift from the De Gasperis and Muzzo families will help build the new Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital. The De Gasperis and Muzzo families, separately and together, have a long history of philanthropy, including many contributions to Mackenzie Health.

"We are very grateful for this generosity, which will benefit the people of Vaughan and neighbouring communities for decades to come – providing exceptional health care for patients and families close to home," said Ingrid Perry, president and CEO of the Mackenzie Health Foundation.

Construction of the new hospital – a 1.2 million square-foot, state-of-the-art health care facility featuring fully integrated "smart" technology systems and medical devices – began last fall and is making significant progress toward the scheduled opening in 2020. Building on generous donations already received, the \$15-million gift is a major step in the Mackenzie Health Foundation's fundraising campaign, which is being spearheaded by a dedicated 33-member cabinet co-chaired by Greg Sorbara and Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua.

The Foundation has committed to raising \$250-million in community contributions toward the total \$1.6 billion project cost. "This gift has been in development for more than three years, and we are extremely pleased to see it come to fruition," Perry said. "We will continue to reach out to individuals and organizations in our ongoing fundraising drive and we hope they will follow the examples set by the De Gasperis and Muzzo families and by all our very generous donors who have made a commitment to our new hospital."

To recognize these exceptional contributions, the Mackenzie Health Foundation has decided the west wing of the new hospital building will be named the De Gasperis-Muzzo Tower.

"We are making great progress, both in construction and fundraising," said Altaf Stationwala, President and CEO of Mackenzie Health. "Thanks to tremendous community support, we are well on our way to completing this exceptional new healthcare facility." This is the largest fundraising drive ever led by a community hospital in Canada.

Marco Muzzo Senior, who died in 2005, was considered a trailblazer in the building and development industries. He and his many partners are considered the architects of modern suburbia. Muzzo also founded the Villa Charities in 1977 and was known for low-profile and generous charity work.

The Muzzo family's business empire includes drywall giant Marel Contractors and condominium developer Pemberton Group. Marco Muzzo, grandson of the company's founder, the late Marco Sr., is serving a 10-year prison sentence in the impaired driving deaths of four members of the Neville-Lake family in September of 2015. The accident claimed the lives of Daniel Neville-Lake, 9, Harrison Neville-Lake, 5, Milly Neville-Lake, 2, and their grandfather Gary Neville, 65. The children's grandmother and great-grandmother were also seriously injured in the crash.

The elder Marco and his brother Elio Muzzo built their fortune on construction from the mid-1960s, working with the De Gasperis family.

They own Condrain, a major player known for building sewers, watermains, storm drains and other essential infrastructure. They are currently involved in the Friday Harbour marina in Innisfil. They also own Metrus and developer Aspen Ridge Homes.