

Magna makes \$10-million hospital pledge

By Mark Pavilons

A very generous donation to the new Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital will provide a permanent connection and legacy. The \$10-million pledge by Magna International will forever link this company, Mackenzie Health and exceptional care close to home for many in King and York Region.

It's part of a massive \$250-million campaign for the state-of-the-art smart hospital, slated to open in 2019. The presentation was made during the company's biannual staff town hall meeting at The Manor on Weston Road. Marc Neeb, Magna's executive vice-president of global human resources, said the very pillar of the company's culture is the importance of giving back to the community. It's reflected in their corporate constitution. Magna, he said, receives thousands of requests each year and they've picked the new hospital because it's a great organization and the facility will be used by thousands of Magna employees throughout York and parts of the GTA. They have also supported hospitals in Milton, St. Thomas and Newmarket's Southlake.

"We're exceptionally proud to make this gift on behalf of the many Magna employees in York Region," said CEO Donald Walker. "Through community programs, volunteer work and charitable gifts, Magna remains deeply committed to improving the quality of life in all the communities in which our employees live and work."

Altaf Stationwala, president of Mackenzie Health, said this is a truly inspirational gift and contribution, adding health care is the core to everything we do in life.

"Magna's contribution is a milestone moment in the foundation's Exceptional Care Belongs Here capital campaign," he said. The emergency department at the new hospital will be named "Magna Emergency" in recognition of this transformational gift to Mackenzie Health.

Stationwala added the emergency department will be the gateway to the new hospital. This high-tech department will boast 35,000 square feet of space and will be equipped to handle 75,000 visits annually.

He's excited that roads and infrastructure are already being placed at the site, located near Jane Street and Major Mackenzie. Construction is slated to begin next June.

"This project is a reality," he said.

Greg Sorbara, Mackenzie Health's campaign cabinet chair and former provincial finance minister, said this pledge is inspirational for both its generosity and leadership. He hopes it will influence other business leaders to support the campaign, touted to be the largest fundraising drive led by a community hospital in Canada.

"We are transforming health care in the southwest portion of York," he said. "It's time for others to step up to the plate." Magna's contribution to kick off the campaign is crucial, he said.

"This transformational gift made by Magna employees helps make possible Mackenzie Health's vision to provide a world-class health care experience in York Region," said Ingrid Perry, president and CEO of the Mackenzie Health Care Foundation. "The leadership demonstrated by this act of generosity in the early stage of our Exceptional Care Belongs Here Campaign will raise sights and inspire philanthropy throughout our community in support of this crucially important hospital project."

Infrastructure Ontario and Mackenzie Health released the request for proposal last June to the three teams shortlisted to design, build, finance and maintain Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital. The winning group is expected to be announced next spring, followed by construction.

When completed in 2019, Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital will provide 350 beds, 1,800 full-time staff and 100 physician specialists. Mackenzie Health is a regional health care provider currently serving the communities in southwest York Region at Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital and through a network of communities sites in Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Barrie.