

Rotary West commits \$50,000 to HHS' Navigator program

by Dominik Kurek
Oakville Beaver Staff

The Rotary Club of Oakville West has made one of its largest fundraising commitments in its history to help support youths with mental health problems.

The west Oakville service club is providing \$50,000 over two years to the Navigator Program, which operates out of Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital.

The club presented the first \$25,000 to the Oakville Hospital Foundation at its June 25 meeting, and will hand over the rest next year.

"We had the opportunity, as a Rotary Club, to really become involved with something in the community that will be long-lasting and really needed," said Nick Praysner, club community service chair.

Many hospital programs were considered, but Navigator, founded in November 2011, was selected.

"Our club is very involved with the youths in the community. One of the areas that appears to be really needed and somewhat lacking was mental health for youths," said Praysner, who noted the program is extremely important to the community and those who need its support.



The Rotary Club of Oakville West is funding the Navigator program. From left, Tina Triano, CEO, Oakville Hospital Foundation receives the first \$25,000 of a \$50,000 commitment from club president Duncan McLeod and Nick Praysner, club community service chair.

| submitted photo

Tina Triano, CEO of the Oakville Hospital Foundation, accepted the cheque at the Rotary meeting.

"I just want to say how very grateful we are," said Triano. "I know the number of man hours and woman hours that go into raising funds like

this. And, particularly, this being the most generous contribution you've ever made in your club's history is even more meaningful."

Thanks to matching funds from two local family foundations, Triano said, the \$50,000 donation will gen-

erate \$200,000.

The group room at the new Oakville hospital will be named after the Rotary Club of Oakville West.

Rotarians also heard from the two 'Navigators', who administer the program, which works to connect youths facing mental health issues from across Halton with the services they need. While the support is usually available in Halton, sometimes it means going outside the province or to the U.S.

Navigator operates out of the Child and Adolescent Outpatient Department for Mental Health that serves those aged five to 19 (with exceptions for those up to age 21 who face homelessness), said Navigator Tania da Costa.

Besides outpatients, Navigators also serve the hospital's inpatient and emergency departments.

It receives no government funding and is completely supported by donations. There is no wait list and Navigators make direct contact with the clients within 72 hours of referral.

"A big part of it is prevention of re-admission or admission into the hospital," da Costa said.

"Not all our clients come from the hospital. Sometimes they're just outpatient children and adolescents and

sometimes our work is to transition and support them so they are not ending up in a crisis."

Since the program began, it has served 114 clients, 12 of whom re-see Program on p.10

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