

HOSPICE A MAJOR STEP CLOSER TO REALITY

TOWNSEND SMITH FOUNDATION THRILLED ABOUT LAND AGREEMENT

BAMBANG SADEWO
bsadewo@metroland.com

A "desperately" needed hospice care facility in north Halton is on the horizon.

For more than a decade, the Townsend Smith Foundation has been on a journey to raise funds for a facility. The foundation has now reached an agreement with Georgetown's Hillcrest United Church to purchase its property and develop it into a 10-bed community hospice.

"This is one huge milestone in steps to building a hospice that our community very much needs," said Townsend Smith board

chair Astrid Lakats. "It's so vital for our community because hospice focuses on palliative care for people in the last stages of life, and it provides emotional and spiritual needs."

Without a local facility to serve the older adult population in Georgetown, Acton and Milton, anyone facing end-of-life situations must go to Burlington, Oakville, Mississauga or beyond.

"There's nothing here," said area resident and volunteer Margaret Saliba.

Saliba recalled trying to make her father's end-of-life care "as comfortable as we could" in a hospital, when he could have spent his remaining time in a hospice.

"If you're able to spend time with your loved one who's dying, and you're able to do it in a setting where you just have to be



Graham Paine/Metroland

The Townsend Smith Foundation has organized numerous fundraisers, including a candlelight ceremony, to bring an adult hospice to north Halton.

you and let that person be that person ... I think that that's a gift," the retired registered nurse said.

The latest progress for her is "like a dream come true."

Lifelong Miltonian Donna Coulter, who in the past has supported Oakville's Ian Anderson Hospice, also welcomed the news.

ents or loved ones who need this," said the 82-year-old Hornby resident.

Discussions to acquire the church's property began in earnest last spring, said Lakats. She thanked the church's council for its continued "community philanthropic endeavour." The church itself will still be operational and will become "a unique space" within the hospice, according to Hillcrest United Church council chair John Field.

There's no word yet on when ground will be broken for the hospice, with a number of challenges still ahead, including getting governmental approvals and securing construction funding.

"One of our next big ones is the fundraising involved in this," Lakats said. "It requires tens of millions of dollars to build this and even more money after we've built it to run it on an annual basis. And we're looking to the com-

munity to assist with that funding."

Realistically, Lakats said it's likely the palliative care facility will only be opening its doors in five years.

The foundation will also continue talks to bring a hospice to the Milton Education Village site to meet the suggested eight palliative care beds per 100,000 residents in a community, she said.

But "we're moving forward," she said, acknowledging the generosity of the community and the "amazing" group of volunteers and professionals for their dedication.

"It's a very, very exciting time for us."

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: With a major hurdle cleared in the campaign to bring an adult hospice to north Halton, we wanted to share how those involved feel about the news and what these plans look like.

"It's a very, very exciting time for us."

- Astrid Lakats

"It's great, especially for all the people who've supported this project with fundraising and have par-

Freshly Roasted Coffee Delivered to Your Door

Premium 100% Specialty Arabica Direct from the Roastery

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS
READERS' CHOICE 2022
AWARD NOMINEE



Buy online at **BLACKCREEKCOFFEE.COM**

Culligan Water™

For a Limited Time
Save **\$500 OFF** the
Culligan High Efficiency System.
plus **6 months no payments, no interest.**



5 Mountainview Rd N, Georgetown

(905) 877-6242

www.culligan.com info@culliganwater.ca

Schedule your Free Water Test



*Some restrictions apply. Please ask your Culligan Representative for details. Limited time offer, dealer participation varies. Based on OAC and terms.