

Funding woes postpone opening of Rose Cherry's Home hospice

With funding options still being worked out, the opening of Rose Cherry's Home in north Milton has been pushed back from its planned June launch.

Volunteers have yet to secure \$1.5 million needed to complete the project, said David Bowker, chair of the Rose Cherry's Home board of directors.

To date, volunteers have raised \$2.5 million in pledged donations as well as \$1.9 million in potential gift-in-kind pledges for the construction.

"We have a shortfall because of a more expensive project than we initially anticipated. We're looking for financing to

bridge the funding gap," Mr. Bowker told The Champion.

The increased cost of opening the facility relates to last summer's demolition of the building on the property.

When the property was purchased in 1996, the original plan was to renovate the existing building to convert it into a hospice.

However, potentially-dangerous mould was discovered in 1998, resulting in demolition of the building and added costs of about \$2 million.

When construction of the new facility was officially launched last June, the plan was to have it open within a year.

But that has now been postponed and Mr. Bowker said he's unsure when the hospice will be ready.

Construction won't begin until all the necessary funding has been secured. "We're hoping to get started this spring," the chair said.

Once built, the facility will house up to 12 sick, often technology-dependent children, giving their families — whom are often responsible for 24-hour care — a reprieve from tending to their child.

Discussions are also ongoing with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to secure operational funding.

"We're hopeful that will be resolved within the next month," said Mr. Bowker.

For more information on Rose Cherry's Home or to make a donation, contact the campaign development office at (416) 360-7673.

Health inspection posting program will begin later

The introduction of a restaurant health inspection posting program has been pushed back due to time commitments related to the West Nile Virus.

The voluntary program — which was set to start this month — likely won't be up and running until mid to late February, said Maurice Dickhout of the Halton Region Health Department.

"Everything that took place last year with the West Nile Virus put us a couple months behind. Our staff had to expend a significant amount of time on that and other things that were going on," he told The Champion.

"We weren't able to get all the summary inspection reports completed, but we're following up on that now."

Under Halton's program, participating restaurants will present a plaque indicating their program involvement in a conspicuous location in the business. A menu-style book including health inspection summary reports for the previous 12 months will be made available upon customer request.

Categories listed on the summary sheets will include satisfactory (or not) compliance for food contamination protection, handler hygiene practices, temperature and storage, waste handling, pest control, equipment and utensil sanitation and premises maintenance.

While work with restaurants is still underway, about 60 per cent of owners have indicated a willingness to

participate so far, said Mr. Dickhout.

"We want to make sure that we've met with and discussed it with every each and every individual owner/operator to give them the opportunity to take part," he said.

"We're going to be following up on that as soon as possible. It's certainly going to be given a priority so we can proceed and get this program implemented."

The Region doesn't have the legislated authority to make the program mandatory.

Last year, Halton conducted surveys of area residents and restaurant owners on the issue, with 80 per cent and 85 per cent support found respectively.

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