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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

ON THE MOVE: Hundreds of walkers young and old, many bringing their four-legged friends along for company, took part in Sunday's Milton-Halton Hills Loblaws Super Cities Walk for MS. Here participants make their way along the five km and 10 km course. Across Canada, roughly 70,000 walkers took part in the annual fundraiser.

Cherry severs ties with kids' hospice

By Stephanie Thiessen
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Hockey icon Don Cherry is stepping aside from his involvement with a local children's hospice, making way for a new patron, a new name and new opportunities.

Cherry, founder of Rose Cherry's Home for Kids, which is named after his late wife, said in a press release that "it is time to move on."

"It has been 10 long years to get Rose Cherry's Home for Kids up and running, and as a family all of our personal goals have been met," Cherry said.

As of Wednesday, the home has been renamed The Darling Home for Kids, after Mississauga-based philanthropist Michele Darling and her family. Darling made a "substantial" donation to the home, but prefers that the amount not be disclosed.

The donation assures the next phase of growth for the No. 15 Sideroad hospice, which provides respite and palliative care for chronically ill kids and a break for their caregivers.

The home opened in 2004, originally conceived by The Cedarbrook Society.

"I want to thank the volunteers, tradesmen, corporations and the government," Cherry said. "Without their assistance, our dream would never have been fulfilled."

As a lasting tribute, the entrance laneway to the home will be named Rose Cherry's Lane.

Darling said she's looking forward to future opportunities with the home.

"We are very excited to be supporting this hospice, which is providing the kind of care that parents and their chronically ill children simply can't get anywhere else," she said.

Darling is no stranger to the home. A grant was previously given from the Halo

Foundation, of which Darling is chair, to the home to launch the siblings program for the brothers and sisters of sick kids.

Kristin Horrell, manager of fundraising, administration and development for the home, said the board of directors is very grateful to Cherry for his vision and support.

"We're forever grateful for all he's done to get this far," she said.

The home will soon be entering its next phase of growth, which includes plans to expand the building and enhance services, Horrell said. It currently has six beds, which Horrell said are usually occupied. In addition, it has a day program and therapeutic programs in areas including music and recreation.

Last year, 50 different families were served by the home.

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