

Foundation Gala brings in \$44,000 for new equipment

By Ken Kellar

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With another successful gala under its belt, the Riverside Foundation for Health Care is that much further along in its goal of supporting health care close to home.

This year's sold out event took place at La Place Rendez-Vous on Saturday, October 22, and was held in part to celebrate the Foundation's 25th anniversary operating in the Rainy River District. In addition to all the regular trappings of the gala that the public has come to expect, the anniversary lent a 25 Year theme to many different proceedings, and featured some special guests who highlighted the past and present of the Foundation.

Foundation director Allison Cox said it was a pleasure to see the community turn out once again to support the Gala, especially after the COVID pandemic led to the cancellation of similar events after its outbreak in March 2020.

"It was amazing," Cox said.

"It was so great to be back in person again to a sell-out crowd. Obviously celebrating the 25th anniversary was really exciting. I couldn't believe the support that we received throughout the lead-up and the evening of."

With tables and decorations set up in the Rendez-Vous' upstairs conference and dining room, members of the pub-

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- Allison Cox

lic were able to mingle and reconnect after years of pandemic induced isolation, and a palpable feeling of camaraderie permeated the room as tables laughed with, and egged on, other tables for events and celebrations.

"It was really great, too, that we saw a bit of a different crowd from past years," Cox said.

"There were a lot of younger people this year, where normally it's a bit of an older crowd, so it's great to start seeing some of the younger community members coming out and supporting health care close to home. It was just so amazing to see everyone really enjoying themselves."

Supporting health care is exactly what the assembled crowds did that night. Cox noted that from all of the sponsorship, donations and money spent at the gala on fundraising activities and games, the Foundation raised just over \$44,000 from this year's Gala, tying only the Mobsters and Dames Gala from years prior. That total brings the Foundation that much closer to the purchase of an additional Panda Warmer machine to better care for the newborns who enter the world at La

Verendrye General Hospital.

"The actual physical Panda Warmer itself is about \$57,000 so we haven't quite hit that goal yet through the gala," Cox said.

"In addition there is a monitor that's required that goes along with the Panda Warmer, and that's what is spitting out the vitals, so it's also a necessary component that goes hand in hand with the Panda Warmer. Those two pieces of equipment together come at a cost of about \$75,000. So people are going to see, quite soon hitting their mailboxes, our Christmas Appeal, which is also going to be requesting donations to go towards those two pieces of equipment."

With more fundraising to come, but a very successful gala behind them, Cox said she is very grateful to the generosity and support of the community when it comes to donating towards the Foundation's health care goals.

"I want to send out a huge thank you to, not only our guests who turned out to the gala and supported that way, but also to all of our sponsors," Cox said.

"It was great to see some new sponsors onboard this year. Thank you as well to all of the businesses, individuals, artists who donated items towards the live and silent auctions and all of our volunteers and service providers that made the evening a success. In addition, I'd like to give a really big shoutout to Clare and Paul Brunetta, who gave a really nice talk during the evening just outlining the past 25 years of the Foundation."