

## The Black and White Gala – A Fundraising Success

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 19, 2009**

PEMBROKE – When the Pembroke Regional Hospital wins, everyone wins.

And with the final tally from the Hospital Foundation's Black and White Gala, there are a lot of winners in the Upper Ottawa Valley.

"I am absolutely delighted to announce that we raised **\$114,700.00** for the Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation," said Marnie Stunt, Chair of the Gala Committee. "We knew going into the campaign this year that we had some hurdles to overcome, in particular the economic downturn the country's experiencing, but we had faith that hospital supporters would come through."

"And did they ever come through! We exceeded the amount raised last year by \$12,700. Thank you to everyone who contributed, either through ticket purchases or sponsorships."

Dr. Christy Natsis spearheaded this year's sponsorship drive, through which the bulk of donations are received. Sponsorships and ticket purchases totaled \$108,000 and the evening's raffle prize draw contributed an additional \$6,700. This year's gala raffle prize included a trip for two to anywhere Air Canada flies in North America, a weekend stay at the Ottawa Westin Hotel, a 5-piece set of luggage courtesy of Canadian Tire Pembroke and \$1,000 cash. Brandon Suckow of Valley Automotive in Pembroke was the raffle prize winner and Dr. Fred Matzinger and Mayor Bob Sweet both won raffle gift baskets.

"I am so impressed by the generosity we were shown," she said. "So many businesses and local people really wanted to help. And their donations are going to stay in the community, helping out people in the region."

Although most people think of businesses when they think about sponsorships, a growing number of individuals are becoming sponsors. For Lisa Edmonds and her husband Tony Donnelly, becoming personal sponsors was a natural decision.

"My mother had cancer and received tremendous care at the hospital," Ms Edmonds explained. "It's one of those situations where you just have to give back."

"My personal experience is that we have to do something constructive to help others. I believe in healthcare in the Valley. If we can help, we should help. All the money raised stays in the local community, and the Hospital is something we're all going to use, whether in good times when new babies arrive or in bad times when someone's sick," Ms. Edmonds said.

Even though this year's campaign just ended, the Committee's thoughts will soon turn to the 2010 campaign. For one, Ms. Natsis would love to see more personal sponsorships like those of Ms Edmonds and her husband.

"You know, people think that it has to be a lot of money, but it doesn't," she said. "Every little bit helps and a lot of smaller donations can add up to something very significant. I'd encourage anyone who might have hesitated this year to become a personal sponsor to jump in with both feet next year."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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## The Black and White Gala – A Sneak Peek Behind the Scenes

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PEMBROKE – Magic doesn't happen by accident.

Rather, it's carefully crafted, and when done right, seems naturally effortless. But behind the illusion is talent, impeccable timing, creativity and a sense of fun.

And magic was created at the Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation's Black and White Gala, held on Saturday at the Officers' Mess at CFB Petawawa. As one of the Ottawa Valley's premiere social events, the Gala promised elegance and more than a bit of glamour – and it delivered.

“It was absolutely wonderful,” said Marnie Stunt, Chair of the Gala Committee. “We worked so hard to put all the pieces into place for a terrific night. And it was fabulous – everyone was delighted. We are very fortunate to have so many talented people working with us. We couldn't have done it without them.”

It was their hard work behind the scenes that made the magic work. The last week of preparations was a whirlwind of activity.

“It's all about first impressions,” said Nicole Godin, owner of Balloons of the Valley, who was responsible for decorating the Mess. “I wanted people to say ‘wow’ – it sets the mood.”

The Black and White Gala was mostly white this year, as the Gala Committee opted for a minimalist palette of elegant restraint. After three years of working with Ms Godin, the Committee gave her nearly free reign to develop the concept.

“Trees with mini-lights in them were around the front doors, to give more lighting as the main lights were off,” Ms Godin explained. “There were eight to 10 candles on each table. I wanted to create an ambiance that's very soft.”

Like the others involved in putting the Gala together, Ms Godin had a lot of work to do. She and her small team started at the Mess on Friday morning and kept working through until late Saturday afternoon. Marion Ullrich, owner of Ullrich's on Main, was another local talent immersed in making the Gala happen. Feeding 240 people is a major undertaking, even after 26 years in the business.

“I really wanted to give people a bang for their buck,” she said, “so they'll want to come back next year.”

Ms Ullrich was brimming with food ideas for the Gala.

“The Gala is the last big social event of the year and comes after all the weddings through the summer, so it’s easy to be creative,” she said. This year the menu featured filet mignon and seafood, and a black and white dessert – the details of which remained top secret until it was served but can now be revealed as a lemon tart.

She and her team of 24 started cooking two days before the Gala – the non-perishables first – and worked right up until the food was served.

“This is a labour of passion and I worry about it – I want to do it right,” Ms Ullrich explained. “The Gala does great work for the hospital and the hospital helps all of us.”

She isn’t the only one for whom the Gala is a labour of passion, or love.

“I just love what I do,” said Ms Godin, “and to get a job like this is very challenging because it gives you more creativity. It’s such an elegant event and I can put out my best work.”

That work included tall vases to give the illusion of height to the Mess’s standard ceilings and orchids, one of the most elegant flowers available.

Nora Johnson, owner of Turbo Graphics, has been involved with the Gala since the beginning, designing the programs, tickets and posters. For her, helping the Committee is much more than a job.

“When I do this, I think about helping out the community,” she explained. “You get a good feeling, it’s a job well done because helping out the hospital is important – we want it to be there when we need it. It’s amazing how much the Committee has done because it’s so young. Hopefully they’ll be around for a long time.”

“And it’s a lot of fun working with the Committee. When you’re volunteering, you don’t want it to be just about a job – it needs to be fun too,” Ms. Johnson said.

The countdown to make the magic happen can be a crazy and incredibly busy time. But the Gala organizers had no doubt that the talented and inspired people behind the scenes would pull it off.

“They are amazing,” said Ms Stunt of all the local people who work with the Gala Committee. “We couldn’t do it without them.”

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