

Bancroft Masonic Lodge Backs the Cat]



By Nate Smelle

The "Back the Cat" fundraising campaign to bring a CT scanner to the Quinte Health-Care North Hastings Hospital received a generous donation from the Brethren of the Bancroft Masonic Lodge No. 482. A special lunch was served at the Masonic Hall on Hastings Street North on Saturday, April 15, where a cheque for \$3,500 was presented to the Back the Cat chair Kim Bishop, committee member Debbie Speck, and Tammy Davis, RN and site manager at the hospital in Bancroft.

Presenting the cheque on behalf of the Brethren of the Bancroft Masonic Lodge No. 482 was Worshipful Master Kevin Fudge. Upon handing over the donation to Bishop, he mentioned that the Lodge would be making another significant contribution in the near future.

Thanking Fudge and his fellow Masons for their generosity, Bishop acknowledged how generous the community has been throughout the Back the Cat campaign. She said on April 24 the committee is planning to hold an event where they will be making a public announcement to update people regarding the progress they have made on the campaign.

"We are getting there," Bishop said with a smile. "We are going to have the CT scanner, and we are pushing to have it by the end of the year. We are really excited and we are really grateful for every single person who has donated to our campaign. We are all as a community going to save a lot of lives; and, offer what is probably the biggest transformation in health-care since we built the hospital. So we are really proud to say thank you to everybody. We see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Highlighting the importance of the campaign and the need for a CT scanner in Bancroft, Right Worshipful Brother Dave Earle pointed out how in the last week alone three local members of the Masonic Lodge and Algonquin Shrine Club family had to travel to Belleville for a CT scan.

Through her role as the Bancroft hospital site lead and manager of patient services at the Quinte Health-Care hospital in Bancroft, Davis understands how a CT scanner will significantly improve the quality of health care in North Hastings. Recognizing how "near and dear" health care is to everyone, she said in many ways it has been an "easy sell" when seeking the public's support. Last year alone, Davis said they spent in the ballpark of \$188,000 just on transportation services for patients in the Bancroft hospital who need to be transferred to another hospital to receive the health-care services they require.

"It's also a very important recruitment tool for physicians, both for family practices and in the emerge," added Davis. "It's really a basic diagnostic tool. It used to be a really exceptional thing, but now it is the standard. Our physicians know the challenges that we have in the emerge every day when we are trying to get a person out; two hours in the back of a rig to get a CT and then back, or go

elsewhere."

Attesting to the importance of having a local CT scanner even further, Fudge drew attention to how there are also many patients in North Hastings who absorb these costs directly by transporting themselves to Belleville or another hospital out of town.

In total the committee needs to raise some \$2.5 million to purchase the CT scanner. On Monday, April 24 the Back the Cat fundraising committee will be making an announcement at The Corner Cafe at 1 Manor Lane in Bancroft. The event will take place at 4 p.m. and there will be refreshments provided for those in attendance.