

Walker Family Donates \$5 Million to new Niagara Cancer Centre

NIAGARA, ON: The Niagara Health System (NHS) is the beneficiary of the largest private donation ever made in the Niagara region. The Walker family and Walker Industries Holdings Limited are donating \$5 million towards the construction of the Niagara Regional Cancer Centre, to be built at the site of a new community hospital in St. Catharines, at First Street and Fourth Avenue.

The new comprehensive cancer care treatment facility will be called the Walker Family Cancer Centre. It will serve the more than 2,500 Niagara residents diagnosed with cancer each year – residents who must now travel outside the region for therapy.

The fifth generation Walker family members are the owners of Walker Industries, a Niagara-based company that owns and operates limestone quarries; road construction and paving businesses; an emulsions plant; an integrated waste management system which includes collection, transfer, recycling, composting, biosolids management, landfill gas utilization and waste disposal; and a residential and commercial development division.

The company began as Walker Brothers Quarries in 1887 in Thorold. Walker Industries is now one of Ontario's most respected private companies – not only because of the range of products and services it provides, but because of the Walker philosophy of being a good corporate citizen and the reputation the company has built in the communities in which it operates.

“As a family and a business that has had strong roots in the region for over 120 years, we feel a certain responsibility to support a regional facility of this importance to the community,” says Sheila (Walker) Bonapace, one of the company shareholders. “The Walker family is extremely pleased to be able to continue the legacy of philanthropy established by the previous generations of our family in supporting the needs of the citizens of Niagara.”

“The Walker family and Walker Industries generous gift of \$5 million towards the creation of Niagara's first and greatly needed comprehensive cancer centre marks an historic, proud and most grateful occasion here in Niagara,” said Debbie Sevenpifer, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Niagara Health System. “The Walker's gift is certainly the largest single philanthropic gift ever given in the long and proud history of hospital care in our region and on behalf of the thousands of patients and families who will be served through the cancer centre, as well as our doctors, our nurses, our volunteers and our entire health-care family, we cannot say thank you enough.”

Mrs. Sevenpifer adds that the Walkers' investment in the health and well being of the people of Niagara will enable care for today's generation as well as future generations of Niagarans to come. “We are thrilled that the Walker family is leading the way in helping us to meet a very great health care need in Niagara.”

NHS through the “It's Our Time” fundraising campaign is seeking \$40 million in philanthropic gifts from across the region to fund a number of local hospital facility and equipment investments across Niagara, (including the building of a new local community hospital in St. Catharines) as well as new regional services, namely the cancer centre, a cardiac catheterization lab and long term mental health facilities.

Groundbreaking for construction of the new healthcare facilities at First Street and Fourth Avenue in St. Catharines is planned for the fall of 2008 with construction completion anticipated for the spring of 2011.

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