

Health: Residential facility hoping to benefit from draw and purchase necessary items

SANDRA DAVIS - Telegraph-Journal

SAINT JOHN - Supporters of the city's residential hospice will be able to see what their support has accomplished when Bobby's Hope House throws its doors open to the public on Thursday, Oct. 7, from 4 to 7 p.m. - less than two weeks before the first patient is accepted.



KatÉ Braydon/Telegraph-Journal
Sandy Johnson, executive director of Hospice Saint John, in one of the residential hospice's empty rooms in need of furnishings.

"We are so close to opening, it's incredibly exciting," hospice executive director Sandy Johnson said.

"The renovations should be completed within the next few weeks; they're 90 per cent done."

With that in mind, Johnson said it is "critically important" that supporters of the local hospice vote to help it win a chunk of cash - Bayshore Home Health will donate \$5,000 to a hospice on behalf of the winner of a draw. All it takes is a simple click of a mouse.

People can enter the Bayshore draw by going to www.bayshore.ca. Click on the Hospice Donation Draw graphic and type the password: HOSPICE DRAW.

The winner will be announced the week of May 3 on the Bayshore Home Health website. Entries must be received by Friday, April 30.

The Saint John hospice won the cash last year, thanks to Irene Thomson, whose name was drawn.

"The more names we have in the draw, the more likely we are to win," Johnson said.

"I have it from an inside source that we're in second place. We've got to get everybody to get their name in that hat.

"We really need these funds to help purchase beds, furniture and equipment."

Johnson hopes the residence, which is located at 385 Dufferin Row, will accept its first patient on Oct. 18, but \$100,000 still has to be raised and rooms need to be outfitted.

An open house hasn't been held at the residence since September 2007, after the Hospice Greater Saint John purchased the building at a rock-bottom price from the Sisters of Charity.

A hospice residence provides palliative care for people suffering from any end-stage medical illness, such as cancer, heart and kidney disease or severe stroke. Its mission is to alleviate uncomfortable symptoms for those who are living their last days.

Meanwhile, there are still naming opportunities available for residential hospice rooms, and the Hike for Hospice is coming up on Saturday, May 15, at Rockwood Park. Register online for the hike at www.hospicesj.ca or by calling 632-5593.