

## GRAND ROUNDS

The 20th annual Tree of Lights campaign is in full swing and the annual RVH Tree of Lights Celebration kicked it off with a bang and a big surprise.

A flash mob of about 40 women emerged from the crowd dancing and singing in unison under the glow of the giant evergreen tree in Low Square.

It was much to the delight of the many attendees downtown on the evening of Saturday, December 3, after the traditional tree lighting festivities.

“That’s the kind of action we want to see in the Call to Action,” exclaimed Julia Boudreau, RVH Vice President of Corporate Services, after the flash mob performance.

Barb Desilets, RVH Foundation Director, says that there is much to sing and dance about for the 2011 campaign and thanks physiotherapist Jennifer St. Michael for helping to organize her co-workers and friends with her choreography and leadership skills.

“We had people from ages 12 to 78,” Desilets adds. “It was really, really neat.”

The event itself was simple this year, but very effective, she says. The flash mob supporting the Call to Action project brought amazing energy and grabbed the attention of those in attendance.

The big event early in December signifies the beginning of the campaign, and is always an enjoyable evening of caroling and, of course, the tree lighting. This year Renfrew residents Miss Teen Ontario East Hillary MacMillan and Paige Dillabough, Jr. Citizen of the Year had the honour of turning them on.

Donations to the Tree of Lights campaign can be made in memory of a loved one and are represented by one of the lights that are lit up that evening.

“It was a great night weather-wise and a lot of fun with the flash mob—I certainly wasn’t expecting anything like that,” chuckles RVH Foundation Chair Jim Lemenchick.

The focus of this year’s fundraising endeavour goes hand in hand with the Call to Action initiative, a unique approach to creating health awareness and support for healthy lifestyle choices.

The inaugural Call to Action project highlights breast health and will support the purchase of state-of-the-art Digital Mammography equipment.

Every year RVH mails out the annual holiday card featuring the work of a local artist. This year Kathryn Bossy’s work graces the front of the card, which serves as an invitation to the tree lighting ceremony and kindly asks for support.

Already, just weeks into the campaign, the generosity of Renfrew and area residents is evident. With a cost in excess of \$700,000 for the new breast screening equipment, the hospital depends on strong support from the community.

“The Tree of Lights campaign is the only time of the year that we go directly to the community at large seeking support,” says Lemenchick. “We are very fortunate as everyone really responds to it every year.”

He explains that the amount of money required to run the hospital is staggering, and this one piece of equipment comes with an equally staggering price tag. Therefore it is important for everyone to understand the importance of this campaign.

In two decades this one fund-raising effort has raised more than \$1 million for RVH that has been put towards equipment and enhancing quality services, notes Lemenchick.

“That’s quite an achievement and it’s all because the response from the community is always outstanding,” he says.

“We continue to be overwhelmed each year by the support,” echoes Desilets. “We see it with the turnout at the event, in the gifts we receive at this special time of year.”

The Tree of Lights campaign continues to receive gifts throughout the year. Our heartfelt thanks to all participants and supporters of the event—it’s a very busy time of year and everyone makes the time to prepare and take part. Thanks to the RVH maintenance team for its work on the tree, Yemens Electric for donating equipment, Renfrew Presbyterian Church Choir and the Cougars Conquering Cancer for providing the tasty hot chocolate.



**The sparkling Tree of Lights in Low Square provides a perfect holiday photo opportunity during the Tree of Lights celebration on December 3. Funds from this year’s Tree of Lights campaign will go directly to the RVH Digital Mammography Project.**