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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Dakens' Family Legacy: \$2 Million Donation to hospital reinforces healthcare for life here in Huntsville**

(July 6, 2015, Huntsville, Ontario): Les and Marijane Dakens, Lake of Bays residents and boosters of the Huntsville community, today announced a \$2 Million Planned Gift to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation that will be directed to support outstanding hospital care for all Huntsville residents. As the recently elected Board Chair of the hospital foundation, Les Dakens feels this long-term and significant commitment makes an important statement about Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare in the Huntsville catchment area right now and long into the future.

"By naming the Huntsville Hospital Foundation as one of the beneficiaries in our will, Marijane and I are investing our family's good fortune over the years in the cause of local healthcare here in Huntsville," says Mr. Dakens. "It's something we feel very strongly about. And like any investment, there are conditions attached to what we're investing in - in this case, primarily having to do with where the new MAHC will be located."

The Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) Board has approved a single-site option for the hospital as a component of long-term planning in Ontario's health care system. With the proposed shift to a new location up to 20 years out, the process used to choose that location is still underway. The MAHC Board and executive team have committed to a location centrally located to provide the best access to care to the population serviced by MAHC (MAHC news release May 28th, 2015).

"Marijane and I, and the Huntsville Hospital Foundation Board, fully support the process and the choice made by the MAHC Board in May," says Dakens. "But for the purposes of making this investment, we wanted to add clarity from our perspective on what 'centrally located' means. For us, it's the Highway 11 corridor as far south as Port Sydney. We support the MAHC process and due diligence in this matter, and they will make their decisions known when that process is complete."

In the short term, and for the current generation of Huntsville Hospital users and local property owners, donations totaling in excess of \$3 Million per year are required to keep the Huntsville site current with regard to technology and other capital assets. It is expected this need and the annual fund-raising required to meet it will continue for at least another 15 years.

"Our role both as donors and Board members of the Huntsville Hospital Foundation is to inspire giving today," says former Huntsville Hospital Foundation Chair John Crockett. "Les and Marijane are demonstrating leadership in that regard. They are taking responsibility for local healthcare and they are serving as advocates for future donors. Our hope is that others will be inspired to do the same."

The Dakens family gift is referred to in philanthropic circles as planned giving or a legacy gift. The donors, in this case, Les and Marijane Dakens, make a charity or cause a beneficiary of their estate or portion of their estate upon their death. The Huntsville Hospital Foundation is written into the Dakens' will and the gift will be fulfilled when the will is executed. There are many forms of Planned Giving to explore - visit [www.plannedgiving.com](http://www.plannedgiving.com) for more details.

"I love this community," says Dakens. "This is our home and Huntsville is like family to us. In my role as Huntsville Hospital Foundation Board Chair, that makes it easy for me to advocate for our local stakeholders and for the entire region - permanent residents, seasonal residents and visitors alike. Our donation today reinforces my commitment. It's about ensuring healthcare for life here is sustainable and accessible to future generations in Huntsville just as it has been for Marijane and I. That's our legacy."

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The Huntsville Hospital Foundation is a fundraising organization dedicated to improving health care services for the residents of Muskoka and East Parry Sound. A registered charity since 1984, its mandate is to provide ongoing capital and educational resources for the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital to ensure health care for life, here. Find out more about the Foundation by visiting [www.huntsvillehospitalfoundation.ca](http://www.huntsvillehospitalfoundation.ca)

For more information or to arrange an interview with Les Dakens, please contact:

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