



## HMATA supports hospital foundation with \$50,000 donation



*(From left) Jeff Suddaby and Steve Carr (HMATA board), Jennifer Simpson (HHF development officer), Marisa Kapourelakos and Andrew Buwalda (HMATA board), Trish Kruusmagi and Meaghan Byrnes (HHF), Kelly Haywood (HMATA ED) and Councillor Bob Stone (HMATA board).*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Huntsville, ON, December 6, 2023** – Hospital use surges during the summer months, with a combination of local and seasonal residents, as well as visitors to our community, seeking medical attention for everything from minor mishaps to broken bones, heart attacks and more.

Recognizing the impact that this increase has on hospital staff and infrastructure, the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (HMATA), whose mandate is to promote and develop tourism in Huntsville, is pleased to support the Huntsville Hospital Foundation (HHF) with a \$50,000 donation.

“When you think how and who does tourism impact quite significantly, it’s the health-care system,” said Kelly Haywood, HMATA’s executive director. “It’s important and prudent for us to be supporting the hospital in its growth.”

Members of the HMATA board of directors presented a cheque to HHF staff at a luncheon at 3 Guys and a Stove on December 5.



“This gift is truly impactful. We have huge goals for the hospital. Know that your support is not only supporting our local community, but our local community who are bringing their families here, who are bringing their visitors here,” said Meaghan Byrnes, HHF’s director of philanthropy. “What’s the one thing that can hinder a vacation? An accident or a hospital stay. If we can provide that level of compassion, support and most importantly, access to care right here in the community where they are, imagine how they can go back and tell people and how they will come back.”

Visits to Huntsville Hospital’s emergency department triple in the summer, noted Byrnes. “Thank you for recognizing what staff are doing to care for everyone in the community — visitors, seasonal and local. They are doing everything in their power to support everyone who comes through the door.”

The foundation’s Business Cares program is one way that the local community can support the hospital, now and into the future.

“The program started in 2015 with the goal of enticing 40 local businesses to pledge \$5,000 a year for five years — a \$25,000 commitment. We have surpassed that goal and have had 60 businesses pledge through the program,” said Trish Kruusmagi, HHF’s development officer, events and community engagement. “We would like to recognize HMATA as a Business Cares partner.”

HMATA, Huntsville’s official destination marketing and management organization (DMMO), is beginning to implement its recently completed [strategic plan](#) and looks forward to working toward its goal of making Huntsville one of Ontario’s most-cherished year-round destinations.

Since 2020, HMATA has dispersed more than \$1 million for tourism marketing and supported many local events, attractions and organizations including the hugely successful Eclipse Walk with Light at Muskoka Heritage Place, Huntsville Festival of the Arts programming, the Downtown Huntsville BIA, the Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce, many community events and local youth organizations.

All of the funds distributed by HMATA are collected via the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax, paid by visitors to Huntsville at local accommodations.

**About HMATA:**

*The Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (HMATA) is a non-share capital corporation created in 2019 to promote and develop tourism in Huntsville. HMATA receives a portion of the funds generated via the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax at local hotels, motels, resorts and short-term rental accommodations. Its focus is on attracting more visitors to Huntsville through sports and cultural events, new tourism product development and enhanced attractions and outdoor activities. The remainder of the MAT is retained by the Town of Huntsville and is earmarked for initiatives that promote and support tourism and economic development efforts benefitting both residents and visitors to Huntsville, as well as affordable housing initiatives. For more information about HMATA, visit [huntsvillemat.com](http://huntsvillemat.com).*