SickKids boosts new donors and donations in Toronto’s spring mini-challenge

SickKids Hospital more than doubled year-over-year donations during this year’s Spring Toronto Hospital Challenge—and nearly tripled the second-best competitor’s new-donor tally—thanks to an internal campaign that revved employee enthusiasm for the cause.

The hospital was one of the smallest of six to participate in this year’s Toronto challenge, though size proved to be irrelevant. It generated 51 units of blood and 11 new donors.

“SickKids is a classic example of how champions can make a huge difference,” says Hailu Mulatu, Territory Manager, Donor Relations, South Central Ontario (SCO). He created the mini-challenge two years ago to address a glaring dip in donations during April, just after college and university students have left the city for summer vacation but before the start of the larger south central-wide Hospital Challenge.

“I do the exact same thing with all hospitals, but clearly SickKids has done much more with it,” he says. “Their public affairs and communications teams championed the cause, engaged employees and succeeded in ways that other, hospitals haven’t yet. That’s all them, not me.”

Strength in numbers

Though the month-long challenge was aimed to boost donations and new donors, Mulatu also saw it as an opportunity to promote Partners for Life, given that five of the six competing hospitals are members.

“Thousands of hospital employees, some of whom are regular donors and who donated in April, were not registered with their affiliated hospital, which is a shame because their hospital won’t get credit for it through the program,” he says. “That’s why, during the challenge, we try to make people aware of how Partners for Life works and encourage them to register online with their organization.”

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