

Hockey star seeks assist from sponsors.

Facing Off “Fore” Charity golf tournament helps patients face cancer.

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NHLer Steve Rucchin (left) and CIBC Wood Gundy VP Sean Nother (right) are looking to team up with more sponsors for their annual golf tournament supporting the Gene Goodreau Patient Assistance Fund at the London Region Cancer Program.

London, Ont. - Facing Off “Fore” Charity is not just a golf tournament; it is a project with a purpose for friends NHLer Steve Rucchin and CIBC Wood Gundy VP Sean Nother. Rucchin’s late brother Larry was an outstanding hockey player who lost his fight with cancer in 2002. The friends’ fundraising efforts honour Larry’s memory.

The two friends know from Larry’s battle with cancer that stress relief is an important factor in helping patients fight this disease. So, they

started the golf tournament in 2008, raising funds to assist patients receiving treatment at London Health Science Centre’s London Regional Cancer Program.

“Our goal is twofold. We want to help make LRCP a more pleasant environment, so patients can hopefully occupy their minds with upbeat thoughts during their time there,” Rucchin says. “We also want to help alleviate some of the stress that can occur with the financial strains that cancer treatment can place on patients and their families.”

Each friend brings his own unique passion and talent to the endeavour. Steve Rucchin knows how to win. He was an Ontario University All-Star in three of his four years with The University of Western Ontario Mustangs, as well as Player of the Year and First-team All-Canadian in his senior year.

As a pro, Rucchin centred one of the NHL’s top lines and helped lead the Anaheim Mighty Ducks to the Western Conference Championship and the Stanley Cup Final in 2003. He was an alternate captain, then captain with the Ducks, and an alternate captain with the New York Rangers. Steve and Larry (who played in Europe) made hockey history when they faced off against each other in the IIHF World Championships in 2001 – only the second pair of brothers to do so in international hockey history.

Rucchin’s leadership and his hockey connections have helped draw over 30 hockey stars, including 2010 Team Canada players Corey Perry and Drew Doughty, to play with golfers from the London region. Sean’s experience and community involvement, including having volunteered as a board member for a local charity, sponsoring local charities and coaching junior hockey, has provided the insight and planning expertise vital in making fundraising events like this tournament a success.

In just two years, Facing Off “Fore” Charity has contributed almost \$100,000 to the Gene Goodreau Patient Assistance Fund at LRCP. In turn, the fund has been able to reach out to patients from virtually all of the counties LRCP serves, paying treatment-related costs like wigs, prosthetics, transportation, child care and medication that are not always covered by government healthcare or private insurance.

Still, this success is not enough for Nother and Rucchin, and while the duo is grateful to the outstanding sponsors that are already supporting the tournament, they see room for growth. They have set a goal of increasing the corporate sponsorship to help maximize the net proceeds donated.

“This presents an opportunity for businesses to partner with a great cause, positively and directly affecting people in this region,” Nother says. “It is an opportunity to be a part of a team of outstanding athletes and members of the community who are making a difference for people at a very vulnerable time in their lives.”

Learn more about Facing Off “Fore” Charity at: www.facingoff4charity.com

Interested in becoming an event sponsor? Contact Sean Nother at: sean.nother@cibc.ca

Learn more about the Gene Goodreau Patient Assistance Fund at: www.lhsf.ca/stories/video_goodreau.html