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Victoria marathoners pump hearts and charities

BY KATHERINE DEDYNA, TIMES COLONIST OCTOBER 7, 2010

Sunday morning's GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon will raise a lot more than the heart rates of the thousands of runners hitting the streets.

Runners and their supporters are also trying to raise \$300,000 in conjunction with 22 charities -- twice the amount raised last year, says marathon spokeswoman Louise Hodgson-Jones. Eighteen local non-profits, from the Threshold Housing Society to the Raincoast Conservation Foundation, are collecting pledges for everything from investigative programs for missing children to new bedside commodes for a nursing home.

Another four charities will get a portion of the proceeds, including KidSport Greater Victoria, Raise-a-Reader, GoodLife Kids and the Kilee Patchell-Evans Autism Research Group, named for the daughter of GoodLife's founder.

"People can choose the charity of their choice because I think we all have our favourite charity," Hodgson-Jones said.

Expectant mothers who drink alcohol aren't always the first choice for donations, said David Gerry, manager of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder program run through Beacon Community Services.

"There's so much stigma associated with it," he said, though women with un-planned pregnancies may not be aware of their condition. "People readily identify with cancer and are ready to open their wallets for cardiac conditions and diabetes, but this one causes people to feel a little bit un-comfortable and awkward."

The organization hopes to raise \$4,000 to send four families next summer to Whitecrow Village -- a charitable organization dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by this neurodevelopmental disability. The program has about a dozen runners, including FASD medical expert Dr. Jonathan Down.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Victoria already has reached its goal of \$15,000 to help provide 100 new mentors to encourage disadvantaged children and youth, said staffer Lisa Mort-Putland. One of the stalwarts is

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an over-70 board member entered in the half-marathon who has raised more than \$2,000. Mort-Putland notes how easy it is to donate online, send messages to runners and the society, and track individual and team goals.

Anyone can collect pledges, even if they're not running. All pledges go directly to the charities.

In the running for most unusual pledge collector is Alberta marathoner Julie Dick. Dick trained and raised \$3,000 while aboard a ship she has worked on off the coast of South Africa, soliciting funds through a website provided by the Arthritis Society of B.C.-Yukon. "She has lots of friends and family here in Canada, mainly in Alberta," said Joints in Motion co-ordinator Trish Duncan, who is thrilled that Dick has chosen to help them.

Dick is running on behalf of her mother, who has long suffered from osteoarthritis.

Last year's top individual fundraiser will be at it again, despite turning 80 and suffering a broken shoulder in the summer. Sister Lucy DuMont raised \$9,245 for the Mount St. Mary Foundation and will power-walk the route on her way toward the \$80,000 the foundation needs to buy new commodes and mattresses for the 200 residents of Mount St. Mary's Hospital.

> For information on sponsoring runners in the GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon, go to www.runvictoriamarathon.com/

[sponsors/charities.php](#), email charity@runvictoriamarathon.com or call 250-658-4520.

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