PROMOTION PLUS
GIRLS AND WOMEN IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Network News

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The Opportunity to Imagine: 2008 Honourees for *In Her Footsteps* . . . Celebrated

by Annie Reid

Exceptional athletes, community leaders and role models for women and girls in sport and physical activity were celebrated Thursday night at the annual *In Her Footsteps . . . Celebrating BC Women in Sport*, a recognition program and exhibit housed at the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum.

L-R: Sally Samler, Debbie Pyne, Sue Griffin, Minister Mary Polak, Andrea Neil, Bruce Dewar, Trisha Smith and Lorraine Greaves.

This year Andrea Neil, Tricia Smith and Roberta Ann Steen joined 37 previous honourees in the permanent exhibit celebrating women who have made a difference through sport for girls and women in British Columbia, whether through their own athletic excellence or by increasing opportunities for others.

"The women we are honouring tonight make a profound difference to emerging athletes who want to follow in their footsteps," said Mary Polak, BC's Minister of Healthy Living and Sport, to the standing-room only crowd. She thanked the honourees for setting a tremendous example for others to follow. "The legacies of our sporting heroes inspire the next generation to participate, compete and achieve," said Polak. She noted the vibrant energy in the room, as people who make a difference in the lives of girls and women networked together. "These are people who have a lot to share with each other."

"Sport is something beyond what you play in your backyard," said soccer star and honouree Andrea Neil. "What I gained from my sport, I will carry through the rest of my life." She noted that growing up, her role models were male athletes such as Michael Jordan and Wayne Gretzky. "But I wasn't going to skate in the NHL or play basketball in the NBA." Hearing stories of women in sport, such as those presented in the *In Her Footsteps . . .* permanent exhibit, makes achievement for women and girls "incredibly tangible." Neil was a member of the Vancouver Whitecaps women's soccer team for 18 years and has represented the Canadian Women's National Team more times than any other player.

"When we were kids, we didn't have these images of what was possible," said honouree Tricia Smith. This exhibit "gives girls an opportunity to imagine. It's all about honouring the future. But it's important to know where we came from." Tricia Smith is a world-class rower, has won numerous awards in international rowing regattas throughout her career and is the only athlete in UBC history to represent Canada in four Olympic Games — 1976, 1980, 1984 and 1988. Through her work with the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron (FISA), the international rowing federation, Smith has helped expand opportunities for women in this sport, including a trip to Iran which led to the first women's rower from Iran participating in the Beijing Olympics.

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This Issue

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Our Vision

All girls and women in the province of British Columbia will participate in and have access to a complete range of opportunities, choices and resources for positive experiences in physical activity and competitive and recreational sport and have equity as participants and leaders.

Newsletter Contributors

Laura Lunty
AJ Murray
Ann Oishi
Debbie Pyne
Annie Reid
Irene Schell
Beverley Siver

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY
Jay Shaw

LAYOUT DESIGNER
Julie Cochrane

EDITORS
AJ Murray
Beverley Siver

PUBLISHER
ProMOTION Plus

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments, or if you would like to contribute to the Network News

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
ProMOTION Plus
#227–3820 Cessna Dr.
Richmond, BC V7B 0A2

Tel: 604.333.3475
Toll Free (in BC): 1.877.557.7666
Fax: 604.333.3450

Email: info@promotionplus.org
www.promotionplus.org

Customer Number: 2125161
Publications Agreement number: 41384544

Message from the Chair

A vision: a call to action, where girls and women in sport throughout this province have access to every available resource to help them reach their full potential as leaders, athletes, builders and citizens of the world. In my new position as Chair, I think about the challenges that girls and women face everyday to realize their dreams in sport.

Inspiring others is just one way of facing some of those challenges.

In October, the 2008 honourees of the *In Her Footsteps . . . Celebrating BC Women in Sport* exhibit and recognition program were announced at the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum. Three outstanding women were honoured for their love of sport and the difference each one has made through their personal achievements and defining moments, in order for others to overcome adversity within the traditional sports system.

The BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, 2010 Legacies Now, the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum are taking hold of opportunities such as these to help us imagine where our dreams can take us. It is encouraging that like-minded organizations are taking up the torch to initiate change and look to the future.

This November marks the first year of ProMOTION Plus' three-year strategic plan. We are beginning to realize our goals and build on our successes. We have aligned ourselves with partners that support our mission and advocate change in the area of gender equity.

Our strategic plan is a living document; something we can sink our teeth into as we shape the future for women in sport and physical activity in British Columbia. We are moving to the front of the line with changes afoot at all levels.

New policy direction set out by Sport Canada will influence ways of approaching women in sport issues and define the contribution and overall achievements of organizations, clubs and individuals. Along with changes occurring at the provincial level that enhance wellness and encourage healthy living, ProMOTION Plus is positioned to incorporate these positive changes and advocate our vision.

Mary Polak, BC's Minister of Healthy Living and Sport recently announced significant funding to support our Women in Sport Leadership event January 22-24, 2009. The theme of the gathering is "Sharing Our Passion" and it will provide a valuable platform, bringing women together from all walks of life to emerge as role models and share their passion for what they believe in.

I am inspired both personally and professionally. Working with the ProMOTION Plus Board of Directors, and being a part of such an important framework where our ideas and values will be built on is truly exciting.

Times are changing and we are taking action. We have set in MOTION a movement that will see girls and women included and entitled to life experiences through sport that they can carry with them throughout their lives.

Deborah Pyne
ProMOTION Plus Chair

Games to Remember!

by Beverley Siver, Executive Director

What an exciting time the last four months have been for ProMOTION Plus, seeing the culmination of our Coaching Mentor/Apprenticeship program and supporting our partners along the way. Our established partnerships are flourishing with BC Games Society, CABC, ASRA, BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum and BCRPA. We continue to develop new partnerships with BC Athletes Voice, the Minerva Foundation, BC Rugby Union and Cycling BC, working together to build a stronger sport, recreation and physical activity sector.

At the 2008 BC Summer Games in Kelowna, I had the opportunity to watch the Coaching Mentor/Apprenticeship program participants in action as their athletes competed for gold and had the pleasure of meeting with them (mentors and apprentices) to talk about the program. We discussed what worked and what challenges they faced in accomplishing their coaching goals. Their feedback has been invaluable in moving the program to the next stage of its development. Overall the responses were very positive and we have been able to integrate many of their suggestions into our plans for the 2010 program. We will be accepting applications starting in December 2008 for the 2010 BC Winter and Summer Games. The first application deadline is February 15th, 2009. Congratulations BC Games Society! You have done it again — another successful Games. Thank you for the work you and the Coaches Association of BC did on the Mentor/Apprenticeship program.

Shortly after the 2008 BC Games I travelled to Duncan BC to work as Mission Staff for Aboriginal Team BC with Karen Henry and the Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Association of BC at the North American Indigenous Games. It was a fabulous learning experience being on the Team BC Mission Staff; they were an experienced group and it was an honour to have worked along side them. While at NAIG I also had the great pleasure of working on the *NAIG Council Hospitality Evening* with Alex Nelson, President and CEO of ASRA. Alex was the MC for the evening which was all about honouring partnerships past, present and future. I learned a great deal about the importance of honouring one's partnerships and even more about the importance of speaking from your heart when you do it.

Ceremonial drum — a gift from ASRA

Girls Rugby Champs Crimson Tide with apprentice coach Richelle Williams (right) at the 2008 BC Summer Games

At the end of this incredible evening Alex talked about ProMOTION Plus and the fact that our two organizations began their journeys around the same time. He noted that we continue to face many of the same challenges, but that we are stronger together and can help guide each other along the way. He ended the evening by presenting ProMOTION Plus with the gift of a ceremonial drum bearing the ASRA logo. Somewhat speechless, I was able to thank him and ASRA for this great honour. I hope that we can live up to its symbol of friendship and partnership as we continue our journey together.

Focus on Women in BC

Susie Sherman, Sooke Minor Hockey Association Female Director

by Ann Oishi

For the past several years, the Sooke Minor Hockey Association (SMHA) has increased the total number of girls registered to 30% of the association. This year, there are 105 girls (ranging in age from 5 to 17 years) on 7 teams. Through the hard work of the SMHA Female Director, Susie Sherman and a program called the "Esso Fun Day", the profile of and interest in girls' hockey has grown in the Sooke area.

The Esso Fun Day is a community event that encourages girls already playing on teams to bring a friend to try hockey. The goal of the day is to create a social experience that is a fun way to try hockey skills and drills. The positive atmosphere is created in the dressing room when the hockey player helps the 'newbie friend' into her equipment. Older team athletes run the ice session and there are activities to try: skating and hockey skills, games, followed by pizza, a video of the session, and prizes. Last year there were over 75 girls participating in the Esso Fun Day and it was a great opportunity to build the program and for girls to experience playing hockey for the first time.

Another event that falls on Susie's plate is the organization of the annual Sooke Girls' Hockey Tournament. This year's tournament is in November and will celebrate its 10th anniversary. It will attract 25 teams at the various levels from novice to midget, making it one of the largest all-girls recreational hockey tournaments in the province.

Susie Sherman

When asked what was the most rewarding part of her work with SMHA, Susie said, "I love to see what hockey does to improve their self-esteem, the girls love to fit in and the team component is very strong." Susie spoke with passion and enthusiasm as she described the girls' confidence, especially how they feel when they have success in a sport that has been so traditionally associated with boys. She sees girls in the 10-12 year old group as the most attracted to the sport and credits the health benefits and group dynamics of hockey as the hook. It is a challenge to help the girls learn both the skating skills and hockey components, but she noted that they can join at any age and be successful.

When she isn't at the arena volunteering, Susie works in the local high school and does some recruiting from within. She is a mom to two grown children, a son in his last year of midget hockey, and her daughter who is a product of the SMHA, having started hockey at the age of 10 and playing until her high school graduation a few years ago. Susie is a certified coach but does not find as much time to coach as she would like due to committees such as ice allocation and the girls program. She does see hockey as a lifelong sport and looks forward to playing and coaching sometime in the future.

2010 Coaching Mentor/Apprenticeship Program

The Coaching Mentor/Apprenticeship program will target female coaches in the province of BC who are interested in developing their coaching skills leading up to the 2010 BC Winter and BC Summer Games. (See www.bcgames.org for a list of the sports included in the 2010 BC Winter and BC Summer Games).

There will be three intakes for the program:

- February 15, 2009 summer and winter sports
- June 15, 2009 summer and winter sports
- September 15, 2009 summer sports only, and only if all positions are not filled

Applications and complete program details will be available on the website in mid December 2008.

Girls Only Incentive Program Successes

Tuff Girls of Tofino Surf!

by Laura Lunty

Tofino Parks and Recreation hosted their first Tuff Girls sports activity on September 29th. Six girls between the ages of 9 and 12 enjoyed an afternoon surf lesson with Surf Sister, a local surf school. The girls met after school, shared a snack and discussed why a girls only sports program was important to them.

Some of the answers they came up with included:

- learning new sports with boys can be intimidating
- It's fun to be with other girls
- It encourages physical activity
- You don't get teased
- You get to try new things

Tuff Girls participants.

The girls were then shuttled to South Chesterman beach where they met with two local female surfers who led them in a 2 hour surf lesson. Most of the girls in the group had never tried surfing before and they were stoked. Everything from putting on the wet suits to carrying the boards excited them. By the end of the lesson every girl in the group stood up and caught a wave!

The participants in the Tuff Girls sports program are excited to be a part of an all girls program. Upcoming lessons include: yoga, self defense and skateboarding.

Tuff Girls Sports is one of 9 participants in the 2008 Girls Only Incentive program. For more information on the program: www.promotionplus.org.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMAGINE *(con't from page 1)*

Roberta ("Bobbie") Ann Steen was a teacher, coach, volunteer, administrator and advocate with a lifelong passion for sport. In a video presentation about Steen, former Olympian Marion Lay said of Steen, "Bobbie was born to help young girls and women in sport. That was her essence." Steen was a founding member of ProMOTION Plus, the first provincial sport advocacy organization for women, and former Executive Director. Steen, who passed away in 1995, was represented at the ceremony by her sister, Sally Samler. "She would have been thrilled," said Samler, noting that Steen was a role model within the family, as well as for her students and colleagues. "My children worshipped her."

In Her Footsteps . . . Celebrating BC Women in Sport is a joint initiative of the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum, 2010 Legacies Now, ProMOTION Plus and the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. The program, launched in 2005, recognizes extraordinary achievements and contributions by women to sport in British Columbia. New honourees are celebrated each October in conjunction with Women's History Month.

Emcee Kathy Kovacs, CTV sports reporter told the capacity crowd about a real life example of the impact of sport on girls. Her youngest son wanted to learn how
to play hockey. When Kovacs offered to teach him to skate, he told her "Girls don't know how to skate!" But at the rink he admired a skillful, athletic skater and told Kovacs, "Wow, I want to be just like him!" The skater turned out to be a little girl in the neighbourhood, a foster child who had endured many hardships. According to Kathy, "Her face lights up when she's on the ice. She is the person I look up too."

Kathy Kovacs and Sue Griffin

"As a community, how often do we come together to celebrate those who live in our own backyard?" asked Sue Griffin, President and CEO of the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum. "This evening is one where we come together and exemplify what accomplishment is. Recognition and celebration are one of the key components of a healthy community."

Marlene Donaldson honoured at the 2008 BC Rugby Union Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

by Irene Schell

On September 17th, the BC Rugby Union held its annual Hall of Fame induction awards gala at McMorran's in Victoria. The filled-to-capacity venue on the Vancouver Island waterfront was a beautiful setting for the recognition of those athletes, coaches and administrators who have given so much to the sport of rugby. This year the event also featured a new award for women in rugby.

Marlene Donaldson (Front, 3rd from right) with her 2008 Championship team.

ProMOTION Plus considers the BC Rugby Union to be one of the leaders in the BC sport system in providing opportunities for girls and women. They support the work we do at ProMOTION Plus and we are pleased to partner with them on this new award, which will become an annual award in their sport.

The Leadership Award was created to honour those leaders who inspire us with their passion and their dedication. These individuals are frequently unaware of the far-reaching, positive effect their commitment has on their team, league, club, sport — on the community at large.

"I love all the girls and have great respect for them. They do great things for both the sport and the community," said Cheryl Foreman, Manager of the 2008 National Champions, BC Senior Women. "Having been born and bred in New Zealand, and having a Dad who was involved with the All Blacks, meant you can't help but love Rugby and to be involved in it. After Laura, my daughter showed an interest in high school rugby I just seemed to be magnetized to the sport again. It has been my pleasure to have been a volunteer in Women's rugby here in Canada at high school, club, provincial and national levels." Cheryl, who has given many hours to the sport of rugby, and in particular to women's rugby, introduced the inaugural recipient of the award — Marlene Donaldson.

"Marlene is probably one of the most passionate rugby players I've known" said Cheryl. "Her leadership on and off the field is both inspiring and motivational. She is a well-respected and intimidating player, always bringing out the best in everyone around her. Her coaching ability with junior players shows her dedication to growing the game, and that is an inspiration to all involved in Women's Rugby."

Marlene, originally from Ontario, now lives in BC and trains with Velox Valkryiesis in Victoria. She is captain of the BC Senior Women's team and has been a member of the National Senior Women's team since 2001. She is a role model and a teacher who shares her enthusiasm for her sport. Over the past few years, Marlene has been highly involved with coaching and managing youth rugby at her club and last year she coached the U19 Women's Crimson Tide program. She is also a member of the Board of Directors for the BC Rugby Union where her passion and energy will surely play a role in improving women's rugby in BC.

"The British Columbia Rugby Union is proud to partner with ProMOTION Plus to implement this annual award to recognize women who are leaders in the community of rugby" said Jeff Sauvé, BC Rugby chief executive officer. "Both on and off the rugby pitch, our inaugural recipient is a testament to the leadership qualities required to enhance the amateur sporting experience for women. As a premier league player, captain of our senior provincial team, high school coach and BC Rugby board member we are proud to acknowledge Marlene."

BC Backs Women in Sport Event

The Province of BC is investing $50,000 to support women sport leaders in training, announced Mary Polak, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport on October 29th.

This funding is earmarked to enable women from across the province to attend the ProMOTION Plus event — Women in Sport Leadership, Sharing our Passion, January 22-24, 2009. The gathering will bring together established and respected women leaders in sport and emerging women leaders to enhance their leadership skills and establish long-term mentorship relationships between the participants.

The funding will allow women who face financial or geographic barriers to attend the event. The people invited to participate will include Aboriginal women, women from minority groups and women with disabilities.

"This will be a unique development and mentoring opportunity for women sport leaders in BC," said Polak. "It is through the example set by these role models that others can emerge as leaders of the future."

ProMOTION Plus is grateful for the financial support of the Ministry, through ActNow, for this initiative. This commitment will help create an environment for women to achieve at the highest levels.

KidSport and ProMOTION Plus Victoria announce 2008 *Play it Forward* and *Proud to Play like a Girl* Award Recipients

This year's ***Play it Forward*** grants ($1000) have been awarded to:

- **Edward Milne Community School**: "Women's Active Living" program for 60 girls age 15-18
- **Sooke Electoral Area Parks and Recreation Commission (SEAPARC)**: "Girl Zone" programs for girls aged 9-13 years old
- **Burnside Gorge Community Association**: "Girl Power Walking" programs at Tillicum Elementary and Colquitz Middle schools.

This year's ***Proud to Play Like a Girl*** ($250) junior grant recipients are: Jessica Coline Neilson (Rugby), Carolyn Simonis (Hockey), Vanessa Loewen (Swimming), Charlotte Galbraith (Equestrian Vaulting), Victoria Henderson (Figure Skating), Natalie Wilson (Hockey), Tavii Toronitz (Synchonized Swimming), Eliza Gray (Basketball) and, Cara Marks (Whitewater Slalom Kayak and Canoe). In the Leadership category: Emily Mead (Badminton); Kyla Kirby (Field Hockey) and; Katharine Smith (Fencing).

Congratulations to all!

Edward Milne Community School Women's Active Living program.

Proud to Play Like a Girl grants are awarded each year to Victoria-area junior athletes to help fund their participation in clinics, camps or other forms of athletic training. Leadership grants are awarded to girls aged 15-18 for coaching or leadership clinics, workshops or training/skill development.

Play it Forward grants are available to Victoria-area schools, not for profit organizations or recreation centres which either develop a new Girls Only program or increase the number of girls in an existing co-ed program.

"These grants provide a tremendous opportunity to support a traditionally under-served segment of children" says Patti Hunter, Co-Chair of ProMOTION Plus Victoria.

For more information contact:
phunter@promotionplus.org

Melissa Perron Receives Leadership Award at ASRA Spirit of Excellence Feast

ProMOTION Plus and ASRA presented a Leadership award to Melissa Perron at the annual ASRA Spirit of Excellence feast on October 25th.

Beverley Siver, Melissa Perron and Joan Wharf-Higgins (ProMOTION Plus Victoria Co-Chair)

Melissa Perron is recognized for her work as a coach, leader and role model. This Grade 11 Student currently coaches Grade 8 Girls Volleyball and helps out with the Junior Boys Volleyball team at Ecole Victor Brodeur in Victoria.

Melissa is an athlete on two Volleyball teams; she represented BC at the National Francophone Games in Edmonton last summer and is currently on the Senior Girls Volleyball team for Ecole Brodeur.

Most recently Melissa was chosen to be on the swim team for Aboriginal Team BC at the 2008 North American Indigenous Games in Duncan, BC this past summer.

She trains 4 to 5 times a week with the Coho Swim club in Victoria and when not swimming, she is on the court playing Volleyball three times a week.

And if that isn't enough she periodically plays soccer in the All-Native Soccer tournaments.

Melissa is one of those rare people who lead by example; she lives a healthy lifestyle which enables her to be a focused and dedicated player on the court. She is an excellent student with much of her focus on Aboriginal people and their stories which she proudly shares with her classmates. Melissa's dedication and passion for sport is an inspiration to those who interact with her.

Congratulations Melissa!

ProMOTION Plus Greater Victoria presents

Breakfast links: Your Network Connection to Recreation and Health

Wednesday, November 26, 2008 7am
Cedar Hill Golf Course,
1400 Derby Road, Victoria BC

With guest speaker **Stacie Louttit**, 2008 Paralympic Games bronze medallist in sailing.

FEE: Member $22 ■ Non-member $25
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Admission at the door cannot be guaranteed. Cost includes breakfast: pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, fruit juice, coffee or tea.

ProMOTION Plus breakfast meetings are recognized by BC Recreation & Parks Association for 1.5 hours of credit toward Fitness Leadership Registration professional development renewal.

To reserve your seat, please contact Joan Wharf Higgins: jwharfhi@uvic.ca

To become a ProMOTION Plus member visit: www.promotionplus.org

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Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation Award & Bobbie Steen Awards of Excellence

NOMINATION DEADLINE: February 20th, 2009

The Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation was created to provide financial support to charitable activities dedicated to advancing gender equity in physical activity and sport and/or the community betterment resulting from female involvement in physical activity and sport.

The **Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation Award** ($1000) is given to an emerging leader whose dedication to the women and girls of BC parallels those of Bobbie Steen and the Foundation.

The **Bobbie Steen Award of Excellence for Career Achievement** recognizes the achievements of an outstanding role model (individual or organization) who has, over the course of their career championed women or gender equity in the area of sport and physical activity.

The **Development Award** ($1500) is given to an individual or organization to develop a new or enhance an existing program or to support professional development which champions women or gender equity in the area of sport and physical activity.

For more information visit: www.promotionplus.org

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