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Donation gives women at shelter a boost to get fit

BY JUDITH LAVOIE, TIMESCOLONIST.COM NOVEMBER 3, 2011

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Women at Sandy Merriman House shelter will get a boost towards a healthier lifestyle because of a \$20,000 donation to launch a women-only walking and running program.

"This is uncanny, serendipitous timing," said Gillie Easdon, program director for Every Step Counts.

The program, initiated by the Victoria Foundation and run by Victoria Cool Aid Society, is for people facing challenges such as housing, mental health and addiction.

Co-ed sessions are currently held at the Downtown Activity Centre. But some women, because of their situation or history, feel more comfortable with all female programs, Easdon said.

The decision had been made to start Every Step Counts sessions at Sandy Merriman House, but it was not known how it was going to be funded until the donation came from Bosa Properties Foundation, she said.

Bosa, whose first Victoria development is the Promontory at Bayview Place, also donated \$20,000 each to the Burnside Gorge Community Association and Community Micro lending.

CEO Colin Bosa said \$1,000 from each home built by Bosa in Victoria will go in to the fund to support local organizations.

Homeowners at the Promontory will decide how the money will be spent, he said.

"We invite local charitable organizations from Victoria to tell us their story, to tell us about the impact they make on our community and tell us how we can help," he said.

Another \$10,000 will be invested by the end of the year and more than \$100,000 will be available once the project is finished, Bosa said.

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