

## Run to Terry Fox statue honours Marathon of Hope

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Darrell Fox, Terry Fox's brother and senior adviser to the Terry Fox Research Institute, and training mentor Mena Westhaver hold granite stones in their honour that will be included in the Walk of Fame at Frontrunners store. Photograph By BRUCE STOTESBURY, Times Colonist

There will be a run to a statue this morning to mark the beginning of the 36th annual GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon weekend.

But it's not just any run and it's not just any statue.

Darrell Fox will lead the group — all are welcome to join at 8:15 a.m. — from the Frontrunners store (1200 View St.) to the Terry Fox statue at Mile 0 as the Victoria marathon honours the 35th anniversary of the Terry Fox Marathon of Hope.

“Terry’s story still resonates,” said Fox, Terry’s brother and senior adviser to the Terry Fox Research Institute, which has raised more than \$600 million for cancer research worldwide.

“It’s hard to believe it’s been 35 years. For me, it feels like it all happened yesterday.”

Fox said you can see bus loads of tourists — from Canada and from abroad — stopping at the statue. “That’s because Terry’s story still has value. When I went out to help Terry’s Marathon of Hope at 17, I said: ‘Don’t worry Mom, I’ll look after him.’ I’m still looking out for Terry 35 years later.”

Fox, a good friend to the Victoria marathon, was inducted into the Walk of Fame outside the Frontrunners store on Friday. The granite stone bearing his name will be laid alongside past inductees, who include Olympians Simon Whitfield, Bruce Deacon and Diane Cummins.

Also honoured was training mentor Mena Westhaver, whose Sole Sisters running group has introduced thousands of women to the Victoria Marathon and Times Colonist 10K racing events.

“This is the weekend where they see their work and dedication rewarded,” Westhaver said.

There will be plenty of elites running Sunday — Lamech Mokono from Kenya is the top-ranked male for the marathon and Lioudmila Kortchaguina of Markham, Ont., the top-rated female — but the most inspiring stories are often found in the back of the pack.

Kim McLean, who was a non-runner when she joined Westhaver’s Sole Sisters group in the spring, will be running the half-marathon Sunday.

“I wasn’t a runner but [Westhaver] gets everybody so energized, whether they are fast or slow, and is such an inspiration,” said McLean.

Also announced Friday was a joint collaboration between the Victoria Marathon Society, GoodLife Fitness and the City of Victoria. It is a legacy fund established for a yet-to-be-determined project to support an active, healthy lifestyle. The initial combined Marathon Society and GoodLife Fitness contribution is \$30,000.

“Physical activity can do so much for a healthy body and healthy mind,” said Olympic rowing legend Silken Laumann, representing GoodLife Fitness.

“This is such a glorious and beautiful event in which to do that. And it takes place in our backyard on a course that is so spectacular.”

As of Friday, more than 8,600 runners had registered for Sunday’s events. Of those, 1,545 were for the marathon, 3,757 for the half-marathon, 2,400 for the 8K and 917 for the Thrifty Foods Kids Run. Registration continues today from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Race Expo at the Victoria Conference Centre.

There is no race-day registration.

Numbers have declined from past years but that doesn’t mean the running wave, which began with Jim Fixx in the late 1970s, has crested.

Longtime race director Rob Reid said the runners are still there — just more spread out as the number of events grows.

“There are so many more events to choose from every weekend, from novelty [obstacle, off-road and mud courses] to triathlons, that people might be asking where did all the runners go?” Reid said.

“With all the new events popping up, it’s like bringing food to a buffet, which means there is more to feed on for runners.”

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