

Walk a mile in Olympians' shoes with CHATS



By Jeff Doner

York Region residents are ready to get moving for the 2013 CHATS Walk for Wellness, taking place from February 1 to 7.

Community members and participants gathered to launch the 2013 campaign and get their pedometers at Upper Canada Mall last week.

Participants are to walk a total of 40 kms using their pedometers to track their distance over the seven days.

Up until then, registrants will continue to track their steps and collect pledges for the cause. This year, the theme of the walk is to provide moral support for Canada's athletes at the upcoming Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

Also adding a new twist to this year's Walk for Wellness is the inclusion of teams that can sign up to participate. This year, the Aurora Historical Society, Seneca College, York Regional Police and Big Brothers and Sisters of York Region have assembled teams and will get to keep 50 per cent of collected pledges to help support their own respective organizations.

"We're just trying to help them get some awareness as well," said CHATS CEO Christina Bisanz. "It's one of our priorities to help out others and, of course, help out seniors groups as well."

So far, roughly 30 participants have registered and the hope is this year's group can help to beat last year's total of \$31,000 raised. CHATS [Community and Home Assistance to Seniors] was launched in 1980 as a not-for-profit charitable organization with the mandate of providing services to help senior's to continue to live in their own homes.

Having grown and evolved over the years, CHATS boasts a volunteer group of more than 580 people and has a staff of 220 to meet its clients' needs. They now offer a full range of home care and community programs that meet the changing needs of more than 7,600 York Region and South Simcoe seniors and caregivers each year.