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WELL-HEELED

Men will don high heels May 5 to raise money for the sexual assault centre.

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Friday, April 27, 2007 - VICTORIA NEWS

Well-heeled men assist sex-assault centre

Andrea Lavigne
News staff

There will be a more than a few wobbly ankles next Saturday, May 5 at the first-ever Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event.

Patrick Weir from the Victoria Crown Counsel office has agreed to don high heels to raise money for the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre.

"As Crown prosecutor, I've had occasion to deal with victims of sexualized violence and when this event was brought to my attention I thought it was a great opportunity to inform the community of this problem," Weir said.

He'll be joined by local philanthropist Tom Williams, founder of GiveMeaning.com.

"I'm a big believer in continuing the conversation about sexual violence as a means to eliminate the problem," Williams said, adding, "A walk that

brings men into the equation is really a concept that is long overdue, not just in Victoria, but in Canada generally."

The idea to strap men in high heels to raise awareness about sexual violence started in San Francisco, but Victoria is one of the first cities to adopt the event in Canada.

Both Weir and Williams have agreed to remove their leg hair if they meet their individual fundraising goals.

Although he hasn't decided what style of heels to wear, Williams said if he receives \$1,000 he'll probably want to show off his legs with a nice stiletto. He's also agreed to shave his beard, if he raises \$5,000.

"When I was in East Africa, I met this vendor, who said, 'you have the most glorious beard in the world, promise me to never shave it.' So I wrote in my blog yesterday that I'm selling my word," Williams said.

Weir is going one step further – he's agreed to have his legs waxed for the

event – a promise that solicited much amusement from co-workers, he said.

While the focus is on getting men to participate, women are encouraged to join the fun, said Tracy Lubick, resource development officer for the centre.

Participants aren't required to bring their own heels, local thrift stores have donated 50 pairs of high heels for the event. Walk a Mile participants can create their own fundraising pages on the GiveMeaning website.

For more information or to register, contact the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre at 383-5545 or go to www.walk-a-mile-in-her-shoes.blogspot.com. To donate, go to www.wam.givemeaning.com.

Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, May 5, the day of the walk. The walk itself starts at 11 a.m. Participants will start and end the walk at Centennial Square.

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Sharon Tiffin/News staff

Lawyer Patrick Weir tries on a pair of heels with the help of Tracy Lubick of the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre in the Central Library Courtyard.