

KELOWNA

Students help with fundraiser

Event tonight in aid of organization that uses sports to work with disadvantaged youth

By J.P. SQUIRE
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A non-profit organization working with disadvantaged youth is receiving a boost, thanks to community-minded business students and faculty at Okanagan College.

Students in the sports and events marketing course and Elevation Outdoors will co-host a fundraising event called A Reason for the Season at 6 p.m. today at The Habitat on Leon Avenue in downtown Kelowna.

Local pianist and singer Thomas Kjørven will provide the entertainment. Wine from West Kelowna's Kalala Organic Estate Winery will be served, and there will be door prizes and silent and live auctions, with gifts donated by local businesses. Ticket sales and proceeds from the auctions will go to Elevation Outdoors.

Four students — Kevin Slater, Matthew Collins, Latoya Bentley and Travis Fleming — are applying their business skills “in an interactive and creative way” to help organize the event, according to Blair Baldwin, who instructs the sports and events marketing course.

“Our approach is to build bridges with the community,” said Baldwin. “This course allows teams of students to develop event marketing plans for businesses and associations throughout the Okanagan.”

SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) Okanagan, a non-profit organization operated out of Okanagan College, is also involved. It is a group of students and faculty “working hard to create positive economic, environmental and social impact.”

Tori Graham Hanson at Elevation Outdoors uses instruction in snowboarding and mountain biking to promote healthy lifestyle choices and life skills while instilling respect for the environment in disadvantaged young people who wouldn't normally be able to participate in those sports.

“We are excited to be working with SIFE and such enthusiastic students who want to make a difference and help our cause,” said Hanson.

“I am looking forward to a fantastic evening that will bring together supporters, provide great entertainment and help us make the upcoming winter Learn to Shred programs a success by providing more opportunities to underprivileged young people in Kelowna.”

“This project gives SIFE Okanagan a chance to work with a generous organization that is creating a positive impact in our community,” said Fleming, co-president of SIFE Okanagan.

“Elevation is a unique organization that SIFE feels is helping troubled youth in a way that none of us could imagine, and we want to use our resources to help them grow.”

Tickets cost \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. They can be purchased from Hanson at 250-808-1626 or by email at elevation@telusplanet.net and from Fleming at 250-809-2199 or flemingtravis11@hotmail.com.

The third annual Learn to Shred program will involve 12- to 14-year-olds in a five-week program starting on Jan. 8, with a second program for 15- to 17-year-olds starting in mid-February.

Hanson plans to expand the mountain biking program to five weeks next summer.

Elevation Outdoors has received charitable status from Canada Revenue and can issue tax receipts for donations.

For more information about Elevation Outdoors, to sponsor a youth or make a donation, go to www.elevationoutdoors.ca online.