

## Switzers run for a better world



By Jim Eadie

Instead of running away from all of the worlds problems, local music teacher, fitness advocate and mother is literally running to help alleviate some of those problems.

On Oct. 19, after training all summer, Valerie Switzer completed the grueling 42.2 kilometre Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, and her daughter Shauna completed the half marathon leg of the run. Together the two women raised almost \$3,500 in pledges to support two projects in World Vision's child protection work around the world: child brides, and child miners.

?The world vision team was trying to raise \$75,000 that day alone for child protection? said Switzer. ?Child miners and child brides have no hope for a better future without the intervention of people like us. It helps me on my longest dreariest runs to remember that my pain and discomfort is temporary. These kids live in deplorable conditions all the time.?

Dubbed by Switzer the: ?42.2 kilometre at the age of 42?, she was so excited to combine running with her desire to see an end to extreme poverty and injustice around our world. ?I have been training very hard all summer.?

For 50 years, World Vision has provided international support for children focusing on education, safe water, nutritious food and healthcare. The respected organization says its objective is to ?improve the lives of the worlds most vulnerable children with real and lasting change.?

As a young woman, Switzer recalls being deeply moved by World Vision television appeals for support, and over the years has sponsored children through the organization. Presently her family supports three children, two in Africa and one in South America. Switzer also notes that extreme poverty and injustice are also present here at home in North Hastings, and she feels that one important part of the solution is education, and empowerment of girls.

?And our environment too,? she summed up. ?There is excess in a lot of places in our world, and we need to be mindful of how our actions affect others.?

This years Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon saw nearly 4000 runners cross the finish line, many of the runners raising money for a charity or community organization of their choice.

The run was a wonderful family outing according to Switzer, but now whole Switzer family is looking running in at the Ottawa Race Weekend next spring on May 24.

?Shauna and I will enter the half marathon,? she said. Fourteen-year-old daughter Sara will run the 10-kilometre race, and her husband Brent will run with their ten-year-old son Cody in the two kilometre race.

Donations can still be made to World Vision in recognition of the efforts of the Switzer women and their supportive family, by contacting her at: 613-332-1404