



Photo contributed

Kelowna social entrepreneur Crystal Flaman of Inspiring Success Inc. is raising \$500,000 for charity with her training and completion of the Hawaii Ironman triathlon Oct. 11.

Tri-ing for \$500,000

Triathlete, trainer, speaker sets out to raise huge amount for Room to Read

By **STEVE MacNAULL**
The Daily Courier

Crystal Flaman's business card reads: social entrepreneur.

"I'm a professional speaker, trainer, business coach and consultant," says Kelowna-based Flaman of Inspiring Success Inc.

"But I didn't want to put any of those on my business card. I wanted to put 'social entrepreneur' because it indicates that I'm using my business skills to make a positive change in the world."

From the past 24 speaking, training, consulting and coaching jobs Flaman has had, she has donated part of her fees — \$10,000 in total — to the charity, Room to Read.

Combined with the \$10,000 she personally put up to kickstart the effort, Flaman has forwarded \$20,000 to Room to Read to pay for a school in Tasarpu, Nepal, that will house 182 kindergarten to Grade 6 students.

"The school is also almost done. It's so exciting," she said.

"At the end of every speech or job, I mention that a portion of my fee is going toward this school and encourage others to check it out (inspiredtogivenow.com) to see if they are interested in donating too."

Flaman is also using her upcoming participation in an Ironman triathlon as a \$500,000 fundraiser for Room to Read.

Including the \$20,000 that's already gone into

building the school in Nepal, the total is currently at \$100,000.

She has been accepted as one of the few athletes sanctioned to use the Ford Ironman World Championships in Hawaii Oct. 11 as a charity fundraiser.

"The organizers liked the Room to Read cause," said Flaman. Donations to it can be made through the inspiredtogivenow.com website.

The fundraising will also get a boost because she will be featured in an Outdoor Life Network TV series that is profiling the charity athletes getting ready for the triathlon.

Flaman is not new to this kind of fundraising.

In 1994 she and her twin sister Carla were the first to ride a tandem bicycle across Canada, raising \$500,000 for the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation.

They did it because their mom underwent open heart surgery in 1992.

Flaman, who also owns the Kelowna International Hostel, says everyone can be a social entrepreneur on some level.

"That's why I position myself through my business as a conduit for others to donate," she said.

"Plus, my goal is simply to help people become the best they can be. My training on managing change, customer service, teamwork and leadership are really about people being the best they can for themselves, their co-workers and their customers."

Such a message is meant to create a ripple effect where people not only become better workers or bosses, but better people because they realize what they do it important.

That feeling ripples into a good attitude, happy demeanour and better relationships at work and home.