

## DON CHANG

~ Killarney Secondary ~



Teacher  
Eng Gr. 8 & 10, Law Gr. 12  
Previously practised  
law for 17 years.

- Cross Country
- Track & Field

### A Message from the Nominee

Dedication—Don is out there 10 times a week with his team, they train on weekends, just amazing...

*Dave Derpak—Principal*

### What “Others Say” ...

Others can believe just how dedicated they are. They have the biggest cross country program in school district 39.

#### ***When did you start coaching?***

At the HS level, I began coaching at Killarney in the fall of 2005. (Also, in 1999, I was a Sun Run group leader for adults. I have been teaching only since the fall of 2000; previously, I practiced law for 17 years.)

#### ***What sport did you start coaching?***

Cross-Country Running /Athletics

#### ***Describe your first coaching experience.***

My first experience was pretty low key, helping out during Cross -Country season, running with students on the team.

#### ***Why did you decide to coach?***

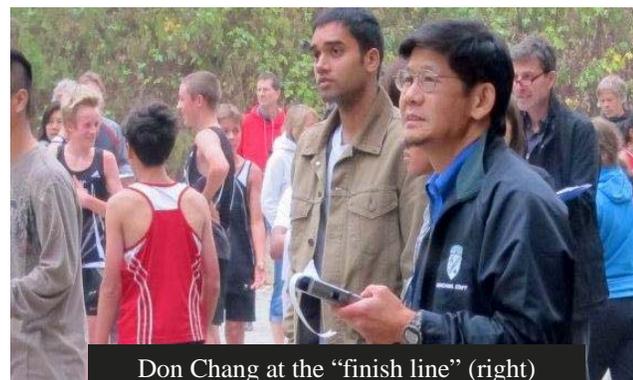
Coaching was an opportunity to share the benefits of sport and to connect to students outside the class.

#### ***Did you participate in any sports at the high school level?***

While I was a high school student, I only participated in sports casually and recreationally, though I was a team manager for my high school football and basketball teams.

#### ***How did you find sport in your life?***

I was a sports fan and track and field fan all through growing up, and at University, I just wanted to develop a healthy lifestyle, but somehow this transformed into marathon running. In 1982, I trained for and ran my first (of 23) marathons, just after graduating from



Don Chang at the “finish line” (right)

Killarney Secondary—Cross Country Team



and trail distance races, including qualifying for and running the Boston Marathon 4 times.

***What sport(s) do you currently coach?***

I have only ever coached athletics: Cross-Country, and Track and Field

***What is the biggest challenge you face as a teacher-coach?***

While connecting with students and mentoring them, and doing it well, is a challenge, the greatest challenge in coaching doesn't have to do with coaching but simply managing time. I am not a PE teacher, but a Humanities (English language arts, and Social Studies/Law) teacher, so devoting time to coaching often means long nights doing school work – prep and marking.



Killarney Secondary School, Vancouver

***What's the most rewarding thing about being a teacher-coach?***

I am constantly rewarded by seeing students support each other and develop the camaraderie and teamwork that comes from being part of a team. I feel strongly that we see this team cohesion at Killarney because we coach students who do not all come from various clubs; the high school team is not merely an afterthought. Their team investment is to the team at Killarney. This camaraderie is particularly apparent in Cross-Country, where student athletes on a team range in age from 13 (Grade 8) to 17 (Grade 12). The mentorship of our senior athletes is wonderful to observe. I am also rewarded by seeing students succeed as the result of hard work – that is the life lesson I most cherish from athletics.

***Who would you identify as a role model specific to coaching?***

One role model is John Hill, who was, in the 1980s, a nationally ranked marathon runner and is coach of the Vancouver Falcons Athletic Club (an adult running club). I was coached by John while I was a recreational competitor through the period from 1998 to approximately 2006, and his breadth of knowledge and his steadfast encouragement and positivity influence much of my own approach to coaching. The other very significant role model is my coaching partner, Robert Solmes. I am inspired by his dedication and the way which he builds relationships with the student athletes we coach, and his “coaching style” has much to do with the success and growth of our program.

***What was one of your proudest moments as a teacher-coach?***

My proudest “moment” isn't any one single accomplishment, but simply seeing students achieve something they might not have realized they had the potential to achieve, as previously stated.

***What do you believe would resonate with the teacher-coach of today in terms of recognition?***

The appreciation expressed to me by the students is the only recognition that really matters, although it is nice to be recognized by BC School Sports.

***Any recognition/achievements for your current team(s)***

The most recent (2012) Senior Boys' and Senior Girls' Track and Field teams were Vancouver High School city champions in May 2012. The current (2012) Boys' and Girls' Cross Country teams won Vancouver High School league titles (points titles) in October 2012 and qualified for the second district berth for the Provincial Championship.

***What has coaching taught you about life?***

I think I've learned, even more than before, to be flexible about what I believe people are capable of. Students surprise me all the time in athletics, and that reinforces my experience with students in class, or people in general. Sometimes all you have to do is ask them to put in the effort, and they can accomplish things that surprise you – and themselves.

***What do you do in your spare time?***

I enjoy reading, watching films, listening to live music, and spending time with my two children. I also run when I can find the time, bicycle when I can find the time, and (rarely, these days) ski when I can find the time.

***How do you balance your coaching with your personal life?***

What personal life? Just kidding. But I don't “force” a “balance.” Life – and whatever I need to do or get done – just happens when it happens. It's the “no-plan plan.”

BCSS *Thanks You...*



BC SCHOOL SPORTS along with all it's member schools, teachers-coaches, student-athletes, parents and volunteers would like to thank Don for his commitment and passion towards coaching in his school. We recognise that without the dedication of our teacher-coaches, numerous student would not get the opportunity and experience to play sport.

