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Burlington's Ally Ruttger, left, and Georgetown's Rach Crane, right, stand with St. Catharines marathoner Ted Geest during a recent Olympic Torch Run event. Ruttger and Crane recently won a contest to become members of the Samsung Mobile Explorers, a team of video bloggers who will report from the Vancouver Winter Olympics next month.

Local woman 'vlogging' at Olympics

By **CHRISTINA COMMISSO**

Metroland Media Group

Welcome to the social sphere of Rach Crane and Ally Ruttger, where "vlogging" can take you to new heights.

The pair of Brock University students will enjoy an all-expenses paid trip to the Vancouver Olympics as part of the Samsung Mobile Explorers team.

For 20 days they will vlog (video blog) like it's nobody's business.

Crane, a 22-year-old Georgetown resident, entered the online contest with Ruttger, 20 of Burlington—both of whom are avid social networkers.

Crane, a fourth-year business student from Georgetown, is in tune with the blogosphere, maintaining her own travel blog, which documents trips through Paris, Germany, Dublin and Rome—to name a few. She also blogged while she was on an exchange program through the university in the Netherlands.

She works as a community development assistant at the University and Ruttger, a third-year social science student, works as the social media co-ordinator at Brock's Community Connections.

Crane said they decided to enter the contest after hearing about it on YouTube. She had spent some time in Whistler, B.C. and wanted to go back for the Olympics.

"I really wanted to be involved, but I didn't know how I was going to fund it," she said.

She's thrilled they were selected to go.

"We have to log about all of our experiences, and tweeting and Facebooking. I really feel fortunate that I get to represent southern Ontario," said Crane.

She's excited that people from their hometowns will be able to follow their adventures.

To catch up on what they're up to now and during the Games go to facebook.com/rachandally2010.

They're not sure what events they will have access to, but Crane's hoping to get

the chance to talk to some of the snowboarding athletes.

"It's all about tweeting and updating our Facebook and YouTube pages. It's a job, but it's also something I am interested in," said Ruttger.

"We invited all our friends and family (to the fan page), and told them to send it to all their friends and family, and in no time at all we had 700 fans."

The girls were among thousands of participants worldwide, each of whom submitted a video demonstrating their interest and experience with online networking and proved their ability to seek-out and generate buzz and excitement about Canada hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Team Ally and Rach's four-minute short was entitled Canada's Lost Species and documented the two friends working toward a common goal—to make it to the Vancouver 2010 Games.

The girls spent a day filming throughout downtown St. Catharines. Forget pricey camcorders and editing tools, the two used a digital camera, mobile phone and a webcam to shoot the winning entry and used iMovie, a standard software on most Mac computers, to edit the film.

The 10 top-rated Canadian videos went on to the semifinals where Samsung judges picked the top five winning videos based on the team's ability to creatively demonstrate their social networking capabilities.

More recently, Ruttger and Crane learned they had placed in the top five for Canada. Wednesday they joined 40 other social networking gurus from the U.S., Russia, China and South Korea to cover the Winter Games.

Each day, from Feb. 12-28, the two Halton women will be responsible for making a video blog that will be posted on Samsung's website.

To watch vlogs by Samsung's Mobile Explorers visit www.samsung.com/mobileexplorers.

—With files from Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

For more on this story go to
www.independentfreepress.com