



UFV donor Diane Delves looks over plans in front of her Tamarind condominium project with superintendent Doug Bos.

Photo: Rick Collins

Opening doors for Fraser Valley women in trades

By Brian J. Martin

Ask **Diane Delves** what she thinks about women in trades and she'll give you a determined look. "I'm a woman in the trades," she states. "There's no reason why others cannot do the same."

To prove her point, the Quantum Properties president and principal owner has created two new annual UFV scholarships for students in trades beginning this spring.

Diane launched a real estate appraisal company to assist developers in the Fraser Valley in the 1990s. As an appraiser, she became curious about her clients' trade. She also noticed that many new developments in the region were two-bedroom units, with little for the first-time homebuyer.

"I noticed that their one-bedroom units would sell in an instant, and yet there was a belief that people wanted more space," recalls Diane. "I felt there was a market for getting people into home ownership and that many would want to start at a smaller price point to transition from renting or living in their parents' home."

Recognizing this need, Diane partnered with a colleague to form Quantum Properties. At first, developing was little more than a side project — both fun and profitable. Gradually, Diane saw value in increasing her workload, eventually buying out her partner and becoming a full-time developer in 2006.

Under her guidance and the long days she put in (she's an admitted workaholic), Quantum Properties has become a major player in Abbotsford. Delves' company is busy trying to keep up with the demand for affordable and luxury housing in the city.

As Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley have been good to her, her family, and associates, she believes in giving something back. She has been a volunteer for many years doing committee work with her professional associations and working with the Aldergrove Credit Union on its board of directors.

"I'm happy to give financially when I can and help organizations that are good for the community and good for my industry," acknowledges Diane. "The UFV Trades and Technology Centre is just that. Graduates from the Drafting program could very well be my future employees. By investing in UFV,

I am in a sense investing in my industry and my own company."

"As for the woman-in-trades award, that's more personal. I have always been a non-traditional female and I've done quite well in non-traditional female roles. I would like to see women think outside the box. Just because you are a woman you do not need to limit your career choices. There are excellent careers for women in the trades."

The \$1,000 Quantum Properties Entrance Scholarship for Women in the Faculty of Trades & Technology is directed at first-year UFV students. Diane hopes that the financial incentive will encourage more young women to consider a career in trades. The \$3,500 Quantum Properties Entrance Scholarship in Drafting will assist a mature student, possibly one looking for a career change or a chance to combine their own experience with a formal education.

For more information on the university's fundraising goals or if you are interested in supporting student success, please contact UFV acting director of development Ryan Koch at 604-851-6326 or ryan.koch@ufv.ca.