



Media Release

200 Youth From Across Canada Gather at National Conference for Education, Expression, Empowerment and Engagement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (Markham, ON, October 4, 2007) — Two hundred young people from across Canada are gathering today at Kamp Kiwanis in Bragg Creek, Alberta as part of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada's (BGCC) National Youth Conference 2007 (Oct. 4 – 7, 2007). This year's conference encourages delegates to declare, "It's all about M.E.," as youth explore a better understanding of their experiences and increase their education, engagement and empowerment through panel discussions, workshops and motivational presentations.

"The youth on our planning committee were very excited to redefine the saying, 'It's all about me,' changing it from a selfish statement to a rallying cry for responsibility and change," says Marisa Wosnick, Co-ordinator of National Programs at Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada and the lead staff advisor to the National Youth Council. "The young people have designed a really fabulous program — one that emphasizes the opportunities for teenagers today, as well as examining the obstacles they face."

"M.E." stands for My Experience, My Education, My Expression, My Empowerment, My Energy and My Engagement, and the conference devotes several sessions to each of these themes. Delegates will hear from world-renowned urban music producer Sol Guy, who has worked with artists like Lauryn Hill and Puff Daddy and who experienced his own life-changing moment in Sierra Leone while volunteering for War Child Canada. International motivational speaker David Irvine will help delegates be alert to the discovery of their own life's mission. Cyberbullying expert Bill Belsey will provide a multi-media presentation from the world's first website devoted to ending online bullying. Cory B. Johnson, inspirational speaker, inventor and former investment banker, will talk about his experience learning to cope and succeed after a debilitating stroke at 11 years-old left him with cerebral palsy.

Youth delegates will also get a chance to learn about sexual health, discover ways to understand differences within their own peer groups, get advice on writing scholarship applications and hear from youth panelists about living with harassment, addiction and poverty.

"We want our delegates to benefit from our great speakers and the unique experiences they bring to inspire our youth. But we also know that these two hundred young leaders will serve as an inspiration to each other. That's a big part of what the BGCC National Youth Conference is about," says Pam Jolliffe, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada.

"These delegates are wonderful young people with the potential to be outstanding adults. Every year, delegates to our National Youth Conference tell us that it was a life-changing event. It's a huge opportunity for young people who often haven't had the chance to travel or meet people from outside their own communities," says Jolliffe.

The 2007 Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada National Youth Conference is graciously sponsored by Sears Canada, the WestJet Cares for Kids program and Microsoft, corporations that continually show their support for Canadian youth through their generous donations to Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada programs. The National Youth Conference 2007 would also not be possible without significant contributions from The Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada Foundation and the Province of Alberta.

About Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is a leading provider of programs that support the healthy physical, educational and social development of more than 200,000 children, youth and their families each year. In 700 community locations across Canada, clubs offer after-school programs in physical recreation, technology, the arts, personal growth and more. Many clubs also provide meals, emergency shelter, family support programs and other supports to children and youth at risk. Boys and Girls Clubs have been helping young Canadians to discover, develop and achieve their potential for over 100 years. To learn more, visit www.bgccan.com.