



Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada
Clubs Garçons & Filles du Canada

Media Release

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada and Sears Canada Partner to Expand Quality After-School Programs in Communities Across Canada

More than \$150,000 to support after-school programs through Sears After-School Enhancement Grants

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARKHAM, ON (September 17, 2009) Fifteen Boys and Girls Clubs across Canada will be able to expand and enhance their after-school programming thanks to a donation of \$150,000 by Sears Canada to BGCC's Sears After-School Enhancement Grants program. Each of the selected Clubs will receive \$10,000 to help expand the range of services offered and reach out to more children and youth in need of a safe and enriching place to go after school.

The Sears After-School Enhancement Grants are a national initiative of Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) in partnership with Sears Canada. The grants allow Clubs to create new after-school programs and activities to meet the needs of children and families in their communities. A recognized leader in after-school programming, Boys and Girls Clubs across Canada provide thousands of children and youth a safe, fun, educational and inspiring environment offering positive opportunities for their future.

A 2009 study by Tufts University in Massachusetts found that children who combine healthy athletic activities with youth extracurricular development programs, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, show the highest positive development scores and the least incidents of problem behaviours. According to the U.S. based National Youth Violence Prevention resource Center, students who spend no time in extracurricular activities, such as those offered in after-school programs, are 49 per cent more likely to have used drugs and 37 per cent more likely to become teen parents than students who spend one to four hours per week in after-school programs.

"There is a great need for quality after-school programs in Canada and Boys and Girls Clubs has been a leader in providing after-school programming for more than 100 years. We continue to grow to meet the need," said Pam Jolliffe, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. "Boys and Girls Clubs' after-school programs provide young people with necessary life skills, positive relationships and help boost confidence and self-esteem while helping prevent negative behaviours that can occur during unsupervised hours."

The average child has 67 hours of discretionary time each week – more hours than they spend in school while most Canadian families have both parents working outside the home. According to the Canadian Council on Social Development (2005), roughly 25% of boys and 20% of girls are home alone after school by Grade 7. Research shows that young people who are involved in after-school programs have improved educational success; enhanced self-esteem; better peer and family relations; and increased positive mental and physical health. In *Reaching for the Top: A Report by the Advisor on Healthy Children & Youth* (2008), Dr. Kellie Leitch cites the Sears After-School Enhancement Grants program as a best practice model.

"Sears Canada is extremely proud of its longstanding partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada to help provide quality programming and much needed support to children and youth across the country," said Dene Rogers, President and Chief Executive Officer, Sears Canada. "For nearly 45 years, Sears has been committed to helping Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada create opportunities for young people to realize their full potential and lead happy, successful lives."

Tens of thousands of children, youth and their families have benefited from the Sears After-School Enhancement Grants. Since 2001, Sears Canada has contributed more than \$2 million to support the positive growth of children and youth by investing in enriching and rewarding Boys and Girls Club after-school programs.

"As a working parent, I know first hand how the Boys and Girls Club helps enhance academic achievement, strengthens children's behavioural and social skills, keeps kids safe, benefits working families, and has a positive effect on the entire community," said Jody Atwell, a parent whose child is a Boys and Girls Club member. "The Club helps a large number of working parents in our district who otherwise would not have access to a structured learning program to enrich their children's lives after school."

Boys and Girls Clubs in the following communities will receive a 2009-2010 After-School Enhancement Grant:

AB: Airdrie and Stettler
BC: Comox Valley and Delta/Richmond
NB: Fredericton and Riverview
NL: Wabana
NS: Sackville and Spryfield
MB: Winnipeg
ON: East Scarborough, Kawartha Lakes
PEI: Summerside
QC: Sherbrooke
SK: Battlefords

About Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is a leading, national provider of programs to children and youth that support the healthy physical, educational and social development of close to 200,000 young people and their families each year. In 700 community locations across Canada, clubs offer after-school programs in physical recreation, technology, the arts, literacy, personal growth and more. Many clubs also provide meals, emergency shelter, family support programs and other support to children, youth and families 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.

About Sears Canada

Sears Canada is a multi-channel retailer with a network of 196 corporate stores, 179 dealer stores, 61 home improvement showrooms, over 1,800 catalogue merchandise pick-up locations, 106 Sears Travel offices and a nationwide home maintenance, repair, and installation network. The Company also publishes Canada's most extensive general merchandise catalogue and offers shopping online at www.sears.ca.

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