



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

MEDIA RELEASE

Boys and Girls Clubs Across Canada Play Crucial Role in Preventing Bullying and Provide a Safe Place for Children and Youth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARKHAM, ON (November 19, 2009) Every day in Canada, thousands of children are victims of bullying and harassment. Not only does bullying pose a physical danger, but it can have serious consequences to a child's healthy social, emotional and psychological development. As part of **Bullying Awareness Week**, November 15 to 21, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is not only calling attention to this important problem, but offering tools and services to prevent more young people from being victimized.

Approximately 25 per cent of children in Canada report having been a victim of bullying in some form. Whether the bullying is verbal, physical or social, it all has the same damaging consequences. Children who are victims of bullying often experience lower self-esteem, poor academic performance, shyness or discomfort in social situations and even more serious physical and psychological problems. The negative impact of bullying extends to the bully as well. Those who bully are more likely to go on to display other anti-social, aggressive behaviours such as physical and sexual aggression and criminal behaviour. Boys and Girls Clubs across Canada provide a safe, compassionate environment that is not only free from bullying and harassment, but able to provide the support and advice children need to properly deal with bullying.

"It is important to draw attention to the issue of bullying and make it clear that it should not be accepted as a part of growing up," said Pam Jolliffe, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. "At Boys and Girls Clubs across the country children are able to develop positive relationships with their peers and together with their families, receive guidance and support to make sure that bullying is understood to be unacceptable behaviour and how to appropriately handle the situation."

One rapidly expanding form of bullying is Cyber Bullying. A study on internet safety awareness and behaviours among Canadian youth conducted by Youthography earlier this year for Microsoft Canada, found that 40 per cent of children and youth report being bullied online. Cyber bullies use email, text messages and internet sites to harass, exclude and threaten other children. Bullies feel they can hide online and their harassment continues both at school and home.

With the support of Microsoft Unlimited Potential, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada has developed a number of online safety resources which are being used in Clubs and a number of schools and public facilities across Canada. These include a Stay Safe Online sticker to remind children about safe and responsible online behaviour, and an Internet Safety booklet designed to provide parents with important information on protecting their children online. These resources and other tips on dealing with bullying are available on the BGCC website at: <http://www.bgccan.com>.

Children and youth at Clubs across Canada have also been working on a project, with Microsoft's support, to share their views on cyber bullying and internet safety, which will be unveiled in February 2010 as part of Ontario's Online Safety Month.

About Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is a leading charitable organization providing after school programs that support the healthy physical, educational and social development of 200,000 children, youth and their

families each year. In 700 community locations across Canada, Clubs offer access to opportunities, after-school and at other times when children are not in school, to develop healthy behaviours, academic success and technology learning, positive relationships and life and leadership skills. Many Clubs also provide nutritious snacks and 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 Microsoft Canada

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