



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

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada National Conference 2008 to feature influential speakers and town hall on youth violence**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARKHAM, ON (May 12, 2008)** Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) will hold its **National Conference 2008 – Champions: Out in Front for Children and Youth** at the Hamilton Convention Centre from May 21 to 24. Hosted by the Hamilton East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club and sponsored by Sears Canada, the conference will cover key issues affecting the health and well-being of young people such as youth violence and strengthening communities, child mental health, and building leadership skills and self-esteem in teens.

The four-day conference will feature more than 40 workshops and an expert panel of keynote speakers. Event highlights will include:

#### **Thursday, May 22, 8:15am – 10am**

**Liz Murray** will share her remarkable story of growing up with two drug-addicted parents and being homeless at age 15. Her life story and how she overcame incredible odds to achieve her dreams was recounted in the made-for-TV movie *Homeless to Harvard*.

#### **Thursday, May 22, 12:15pm – 1:15pm**

##### **Future Shop Future Leaders Scholarships Luncheon**

Sponsored by Future Shop, this BGCC program awards post-secondary scholarships to Boys and Girls Club youth to help them pursue their academic goals. This year's recipients will be announced during the luncheon. Keynote speaker: The **Honourable Monte Solberg**, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development (HRSDC).

#### **Thursday, May 22, 3:15pm – 4:45pm**

##### **Town Hall: Voices on Violence: A Dialogue About the Leadership Role Boys and Girls Clubs Play in Strengthening Communities**

This forum will give Boys and Girls Club staff and volunteers the opportunity to talk about what violence looks like in their communities and the important role they play in mitigating violence and building strategies to strengthen our communities.

Moderator: CBC journalist **Mark Kelley**

Panelists: **Michael Chettleburgh**, recognized Canadian street gang expert and author of *Young Thugs: Inside the Dangerous World of Canadian Street Gangs*, *The Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs*, and publisher and editor of *Lessons From a Gang Cop*.

**Peter Amponsah**, alumnus of the Boys and Girls Club of Albion, former Boys and Girls Clubs of Ontario Provincial Youth Council member, and BGCC National Board Member.

**Corinne Rusch-Drutz**, Director of Communications and Membership Development at YWCA Canada.

#### **Saturday, May 24, 8:15am – 10am**

**Dr. Jean Clinton**, child and adolescent psychiatrist and assistant clinical professor at McMaster University's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neuroscience, will discuss adolescent brain development and its implications for planning and programming for teens at the Boys and Girls Clubs in Canada.

**Saturday, May 24, 12:15pm – 1:15pm**

**The CanTech Digital Arts Contest Awards**

Sponsored by Microsoft Unlimited Potential, the Digital Arts Contest awards prizes to Boys and Girls Club children and youth who submit creative works in digital photography, web design, and graphic design, music or digital movie-making. The winners will be announced during the luncheon.

**Saturday, May 24, 1:30pm – 2:45pm**

**Dr. Simon Davidson**, child, adolescent and family psychiatrist and Chief of Psychiatry at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, will give the keynote address at the BGCC Annual General Meeting. He will focus on identifying and managing mental health problems in children and youth.

For a complete schedule of events on the **National Conference 2008 – Champions: Out in Front for Children and Youth**, visit the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada website at [www.bgccan.com](http://www.bgccan.com).

**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](http://www.bgccan.com).

**Media Contacts:**

Christine Amendola  
BGCC Communications  
(905) 477-7272 ext. 237  
[camendola@bgccan.com](mailto:camendola@bgccan.com)

Glenn Harkness  
Hamilton East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club  
(905) 549-2814  
[glenn@kboysandgirlsclub.com](mailto:glenn@kboysandgirlsclub.com)