



Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia to Honour Achievement in Program Development for Canadian Children and Youth

Bell Canada Awards of Excellence luncheon celebrates innovation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **Kelowna, BC (April 26, 2004)** – Her Honour, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo, PC, CM, OBC, will present the 2004 *Bell Canada Awards of Excellence* to five Boys and Girls Clubs from across Canada, which have demonstrated innovation and creativity in the development of programs for children, youth and families in their local communities. The Awards presentation will be held on Friday, April 30, 2004 during the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) National Conference (April 28 – May 1) at the Grand Okanagan Lakefront Resort in Kelowna, British Columbia.

The Bell Canada Awards of Excellence program is Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada's national recognition for community leadership in the development of innovative programs and services, which strengthen and enrich the services available to young people and their families nationwide.

"We are proud of the leadership shown by our clubs throughout Canada in the creation of programs that address critical social needs," said Pam Jolliffe, National Executive Director, BGCC, "We are very grateful to have the tremendous support of Bell Canada for this Awards program, which recognizes programs that have a lasting positive impact on Canadian children and youth and their communities."

"The Bell Canada Awards of Excellence program provides an ideal opportunity to both celebrate and encourage outstanding achievement by Boys and Girls Clubs," remarked Paul Healey, President, Western Canada, Bell Canada. "Bell's support of young Canadians empowers them to use innovation to create a strong, bright future for themselves, their communities and our country."

Through the generosity of Bell Canada, 2004 Award recipients each receive a \$2,000 cash prize to use toward club program development and the opportunity to share best practices with colleagues, through workshop presentations of award-winning programs. Bell Canada has been a proud supporter of Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada for more than 20 years and founding sponsor of the Bell Canada Awards of Excellence since 1994.

About Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) is a leading national youth organization established over 100 years ago. BGCC's network of 101 community-based clubs help children and youth reach their full potential, by providing safe, fun and stimulating recreational, educational and social development programs. Club programs aim to build skills, develop character and foster self-esteem in children and youth, so that they can become healthy, contributing adults. Clubs currently offer services to 150,000 children and youth in 430 communities nationwide. Please visit www.bgccan.com for more details.

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The 2004 Awards of Excellence Recipients:

Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton, AB

The Meal Program at Bruce Campbell Youth Centre is a unique life skills program that addresses the needs of homeless youth and youth at risk of becoming homeless. By budgeting for food, making healthy menu choices, preparing meals, and learning about cleanliness and food safety, youth are empowered with the skills to make healthy lifestyle choices. Six days a week, about 40 youth prepare and eat a balanced and imaginative hot meal consisting of a main entrée and either a salad or vegetable. The need for such a program was identified by the Youth Centre and its partners who found that youth were coming to the drop-in program hungry – for some, the Meal Program provides the only meal of the day. During meals, the music goes off, hats come off at the table, and as a group they 'cheer the cook'. The friendly family atmosphere combined with the life skills learned has led to the tremendous success of the program.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Vancouver, BC

The **MN8 Sound** program of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Vancouver is making the music and performance dreams of Vancouver youth a reality. Primarily serving youth who are at-risk for substance misuse, MN8 Sound provides an outlet for youth to communicate their experiences, emotions and dreams. MN8 Sound is the only youth-driven record label and recording studio in North America that gives its members the opportunity to write and record songs in addition to developing technical skills in sampling and mixing and new media skills. Inevitably, youth gain confidence, self-esteem and learn a variety of job and life skills through their involvement in the program.

Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs, MB

The **Healthy Choices** program is designed to engage youth at risk for substance abuse in positive, empowering relationships and activities that build skills and resiliency. Serving predominantly Aboriginal youth, the program encourages participants to identify a skill that they are attracted to and helps them develop that skill. Participants also do volunteer work in the community and take part in group information sharing sessions where they develop strategies to deal with the challenges they face. The youth-driven approach has succeeded in increasing involvement in positive, non-school activities, increasing a sense of belonging and decreasing negative risk-taking behaviour such as drug use and crime.

Boys and Girls Club of York Region, ON

One-80 was launched as the premiere youth newspaper across Ontario's York Region in the spring of 2002 publishing articles written for youth, by youth. With over 350 freelance contributors, and 47 youth editors, the newspaper has had incredible impact. Distributed monthly, One-80 gives youth a forum to voice their thoughts and opinions, builds relationships

between adults and youth, builds self esteem and provides opportunities for skill and career development. In addition to the positive impact it has on its contributors through its workshops and employment skills development, One-80's content challenges its readership of 100,000 to get involved and have their voices heard.

Charlottetown Boys and Girls Club, PEI

The Survival Centre for Youth was developed to address the needs of youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Housing a Teen Health Clinic and Wellness Centre, the Survival Centre offers life skills training, community kitchens, and emergency basic needs such as food and clothing. The Teen Health Clinic is offered one evening a week and is staffed by public health nurses and a physician. By helping youth to meet their immediate needs in a comfortable, encouraging drop-in environment, youth are better able to make healthy choices about their lives and find the support that they need. Through collaboration with many community agencies, the Survival Centre for youth is able to successfully offer referrals and connections to services that youth may be too intimidated to use otherwise.

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