



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

Media Release

Sears Canada helps Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada provide kids with a safe and positive alternative to the streets through After-School Grants

27 Clubs across Canada to each receive \$10,000 for after-school programs and activities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARKHAM, ON (September 9, 2008) Sears Canada will contribute \$277,700 to Boys and Girls Clubs across Canada for the 2008-09 school year as part of its Sears After-School Enhancement Grants program. Twenty-seven Boys and Girls Clubs across Canada will each receive \$10,000 that will enable them to provide a safe, fun and enriching after-school alternative to the streets for thousands of local children and youth. Two additional Clubs will also receive a significant Sears donation under the Sears After-School Enhancement Grants program for special Club enhancements for delivering after-school programs.

The Sears After-School Enhancement Grants are a national initiative of Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) in partnership with Sears Canada. With the grants, the Clubs will be able to expand existing after-school programs that comprise a wide range of activities and services, and create new after-school programs to help families and communities in need of support.

Many children and youth in Canada don't have a parent at home waiting to greet them after the school day ends. Young people with nowhere to go are more likely to get into trouble with the law, drop out of school, and engage in destructive and potentially criminal behaviours. They are also at greater risk for poor mental and physical health.

According to the Canadian Council on Social Development (2005), 80% of mothers of school-aged children are employed outside the home (an increase of 42% in 25 years). Roughly 25% of boys and 20% of girls are home alone after school by Grade 7. Young people are most likely to be bullied after school and most likely to engage in unsupervised Internet use. The average child spends 67 hours of discretionary time each week – more hours than they spend in school.

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. The report also calls on the federal government to play a leadership role in encouraging healthy activities during the after-school time period, especially among children and youth from lower- to middle-income families.

"The after-school hours are a critical time for children who are unsupervised and have nowhere safe to go," said Pam Jolliffe, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. "With the help of caring adult mentors, Boys and Girls Clubs after-school programs can offer these kids a positive place where they can participate in activities that help nurture their personal, social, physical and academic development."

Many thousands of children, youth and their families have benefited from the Sears After-School Enhancement Grants. A survey conducted by Ipsos Reid in 2005 revealed that 69% of alumni said that their involvement with Boys and Girls Clubs saved their lives. 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.

"Sears Canada is proud of its more than 40-year partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada," said Eliana Cugini, Manager, Corporate Communications, Sears Canada. "We are committed to helping kids gain access to opportunities that enable them to build confidence and skills, overcome personal challenges, and achieve their true potential."

Since 2001, Sears Canada has contributed nearly \$2 million to support the positive growth of children and youth by investing in enriching and rewarding Boys and Girls Club after-school programs for children and youth.

Boys and Girls Clubs in the following communities will receive a 2008-2009 After-School Enhancement Grant:

AB: Brooks and District, Calgary, Lethbridge, Saddle Lake and Wainwright

BC: Central Vancouver Island, Greater Vancouver, Greater Victoria and Kamloops

NB: Grand Manan, Moncton and Petitcodiac

NL: Gander, St. Anthony and St. John's

NS: Cole Harbour, East Dartmouth and Spryfield

MB: Thompson

ON: Albion, Brantford, Niagara, Peel and West Scarborough

PEI: Charlottetown

QC: Dawson and Lachine

SK: Regina and Saskatoon

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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