

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **For Immediate Release**



## **BC SMASHES MOVE FOR HEALTH DAY RECORD More than 78,000 British Columbians get active.**

**Burnaby, BC (Friday, May 15, 2009)** – British Columbians have set a new record for participation in Move for Health Day in this province. Approximately 78,391 people got out, got active and had fun at free events in communities across BC last week. This is a substantial increase over last year's turnout of 68,000 and exceeds this year's goal of 70,000.

Move for Health Day is held annually on May 10<sup>th</sup> (although some communities schedule events on other days) and is intended to encourage people to adopt physically active, healthy lifestyles. It was started as an international event by the World Health Organization in 2002. The BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), in collaboration with various partner groups, has spearheaded the organization of Move for Health Day activities in this province since the inception of the event.

BCRPA Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Allard Strutt says the turnout shows how important active lifestyles are to BC's culture. "A lot of people understand that in addition to being fun, physical activity plays a major role in helping you stay healthy and socially engaged. It's really a fundamental key to having a high quality of life."

The provincial launch for 2009 Move for Health Day was at the Surrey Inukshuk Relay on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Dianne Watts was on hand as roughly 800 students from W.E. Kinvig Elementary and Henry Bose Elementary ran an obstacle course, danced, learned about nutrition and participated in other activities at the event in Unwin Park.

Communities across the province hosted a range of activities, including stroller fitness classes for parents, walks with the mayor or chief, and free days at local rec centres, arenas and pools.

Another event of note was the annual competition between Quesnel and Williams Lake to see which community could get more people active. This year, Quesnel took the prize, with 6,124 participants, compared to Williams Lake's 4,784. To acknowledge the victory, Williams Lake city hall had to fly the Quesnel flag.

Meanwhile, in the Local Government Challenge to see who could get the most staff members moving, the Fraser Valley Regional District came out on top with 62%. Chilliwack finished second with 57%, Vancouver rounded-out the top three with 26%, New Westminster followed at 22% and Langley finished things off at 20%.

Photos of 2009 Move for Health Day events are available to the media upon request.

For more information about Move for Health Day, visit the BCRPA website:  
[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/mfhd](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/mfhd)

## BACKGROUND:

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association is a not for profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active healthy lifestyles and communities in BC. Established in 1958, the Association is a central resource agency for members and stakeholders of the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture industry, providing leadership, training and support to help meet national, provincial and local priorities. Through a diverse network of partners and extensive programs and services, BCRPA actively advocates accessibility and inclusiveness to recreation and physical activity and strives to bridge the gap between the recreation and sport system to increase participation from “playground to podium.”

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### MOVE FOR HEALTH DAY PARTNERS:

2010 Legacies Now / The Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Association of BC / Action Schools! BC / BC Healthy Living Alliance / BC Lung Association / BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport / BC Pediatric Society / BC Recreation and Parks Association / BC Therapeutic Recreation Association / Canadian Cancer Society of BC & Yukon / Canadian Diabetes Association – Pacific Division / Dietitians of Canada / Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon / Physical Education Teachers of BC / Premier’s Sport Awards Program / Sport BC / SportMed BC / The Arthritis Society / Union of BC Municipalities



Media sponsor of 2009  
Move for Health Day.