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## VICTIM SERVICES AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

November 27, 2008

The Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction were established in 2007 to honour victims of crime, as well as victim services professionals and volunteers whose efforts have made a difference in their communities.

The recipients of the 2008 Victim Services Awards of Distinction are:

### Victims of Crime:

- **Travis Bailey** became a victim of gun violence in a case of mistaken identity in 2006. He has since become a voice in the community to raise awareness about Acquired Brain Injury and an advocate for other victims of violence who experience brain injury.
- **John Dick** is the co-ordinator of the Patient Council at Whitby Mental Health Centre, which provides a consumer's perspective on systemic issues and services offered at the Centre. He speaks about his past experience of being sexually abused as a child to raise awareness and to encourage those who have been similarly affected to seek help.
- **Mike Neuts** and his wife Brenda, who lost their son Myles in a tragic 1998 incident at school, have been child advocates ever since. They have addressed children, educators, law enforcement groups and many other community organizations across the country.
- **Louise Russo** became a victim of gun violence in 2004, when she was paralyzed from the chest down. The founder of Walk Against Violence Everywhere (WAVE), Russo works to encourage youth to be respectful, responsible and to take leadership roles in keeping their schools and communities safe.

### Victim Service Providers:

- **Glenna Byers** is co-ordinator of the SupportLink Program, which helps individuals at high risk of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking to develop comprehensive safety plans. She helps clients to identify useful safety strategies and provides support, advocacy and referrals to appropriate community agencies. Byers has worked in the field of family violence for more than two decades, and much of that time has been spent as a crisis worker in shelters for abused women.
- **Kathleen Fitzgerald** has guided the program for victims of sexual assault at the Lake of the Woods District Hospital for the past six years, as it expanded from sexual assault response to include a domestic violence and child abuse response team. She has worked with women and children who are victims of violence for many years, from the Northwest Territories to Australia. Together with her current nursing team

Fitzgerald works with local community partners to help women, children and men who are victims of violence to receive the services they need.

- **Brenda LaForme** has dedicated her life to working within several Native Friendship Centres in Ontario to help urban Aboriginal people to gain their rightful place within Canadian society. Most recently, LaForme has advocated for, and assisted residential school survivors, in their healing process. She has worked in three community alternative justice programs, which are widely accepted to assist victims in healing from abuses and crime.
- **Danielle Ridge** is the legal advocate co-ordinator at Interval House of Hamilton, where she has worked for the past six years. Ridge, who became a mother on October 15, 2008, helps women and their children who have been affected by domestic violence through the judicial system. She also provides training on domestic violence response for professionals in Hamilton and surrounding areas.

### **Organizations:**

- **L'Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes** is a provincial body founded in 1988 by front-line workers who saw the need for a provincial organization. Its goals are to promote and support women who are victims of violence through the development of French-language resources, training, educational material and communication among community groups, agencies and organizations that work in the area of violence against women.

The organization also works to prevent violence against women by promoting greater awareness and action through its programs and services, which include the creation of specific programs for immigrant women regarding violence against women in Ottawa, Hamilton and Toronto.

- **Luke's Place Support and Resource Centre for Women and Children**, named in memory of Luke Schillings, is the only resource centre in Canada to focus solely on legal issues surrounding divorce, separation and child custody for abused women and their children. Women are offered accompaniment to, and help to prepare for, court and legal meetings, as well as safety planning, education and information. Luke's Place also helps abused women in representing their children's best interests as well as providing children with a caring, safe, engaging environment while their mothers get the support they need.
- **Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County** has worked to assist newcomers in meeting the challenges of settlement and integration for over three decades. Its programs provide the knowledge and skills needed to help immigrants participate fully in the Windsor and Essex community. The council's extensive outreach activities include innovative programs, workshops, original research and unique partnerships, and the Carrousel of the Nations, which for many years has celebrated diversity and contributed to the vitality of Windsor.
- **Sheatre** is a professional community arts organization that creates, develops and produces socially relevant theatre and arts that arise from and address issues of public concern. Founded in 1985, Sheatre has produced and co-facilitated more than 80 plays and interactive presentations in Canada, the US and England, but the company primarily serves the Grey-Bruce region. Its recent theatre forum production, *Far From the Heart*,

which addresses dating violence and healthy relationships, has been presented to one quarter of the local student youth population.

- **Threads of Life** is a unique organization that provides victims of workplace injuries and their families with one-on-one peer support, assistance and links to appropriate community support agencies. This national organization is dedicated to helping families along their journey of healing. Its current programs include family support through personal and sustained interaction with trained peers, and a speakers' bureau that consists of volunteer members who offer their personal testimonies.

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