



News Release

For Immediate Release
October 16, 2008

B.C.'s Representative Honours Outstanding Champions for Children and Youth

VICTORIA -- Four British Columbians and two B.C. organizations are receiving recognition for their excellence and exceptional efforts benefiting children and youth around the province.

The 2008 Representative for Children and Youth Awards of Excellence recognize recipients for their commitment to and focus on improving the lives of vulnerable children. Award winners are being recognized at a dinner on Monday, October 20th, during the *2008 Champions for Children and Youth Summit* in Vancouver.

"I am so very pleased to turn the spotlight on these champions through our Awards of Excellence," said Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond. "These individuals and organizations were nominated by their peers, families and others that see their incredible work every day. Too often, those working to ensure children's well-being are unsung heroes. We are honored to be part of celebrating their achievements."

Award recipients are:

- **Advocacy Award of Excellence:** Mr. Fred Ford, Victoria
- **Cultural Heritage and Diversity Award of Excellence:** Mr. Peter Thomas McKay, New Aiyansh
- **Innovative Services Award of Excellence:** Fir Square Combined Care Program at BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre, Vancouver
- **Service Provider Award of Excellence:** The After Hours Program (Team Members) Ministry of Children and Family Development, Fraser Region
- **Youth Leadership Award of Excellence:** Ms. Bacilia "Cia" Ramirez, Vancouver
- **Life-time Achievement Award of Excellence:** Dr. Lois Jean Hlady, Vancouver

Nominations for the awards were reviewed by an independent panel of respected community members. The Representative was assisted in the judging by Mr. Sandy Cooke, former executive director of Covenant House Vancouver and current Vice Chair of the Federation BC Youth In Care Networks; Ms Janet Austin, CEO of the YWCA Vancouver; and Chief Betty Patrick of the Lake Babine Nation.

The *Champions for Children and Youth, 2008 BC Summit* is being held at the Sheraton Wall Centre in Vancouver, Monday October 20th and Tuesday October 21st, 2008. For more information on the Summit and the Representative's Awards of Excellence, visit www.rcybc.ca.

"The Summit will examine broader influencing factors of well-being with the clear and emphatic purpose of improving children's lives," said Turpel-Lafond. "While we are looking beyond our borders to explore excellent holistic approaches that better the lives of children and youth, it's important to also recognize the great work being done here at home."

The Representative for Children and Youth is an independent Officer of the Legislature, who champions the fundamental rights of vulnerable children and youth, and promotes improvements in the delivery of services to them. The Representative has offices in Burnaby, Victoria and Prince George.

Backgrounder attached.

Media contact:

Marg LeGuilloux
Communications Director
Phone: 250.356.0835
Cell: 250.893.8244