



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 1:00AM
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Contact: Jo-Anne Emery
(604) 936-6227 / 728-5230
courage-media@shaw.ca

**Coast Mental Health Announces
Sixth and Final 2008 Courage To Come Back Award Recipient
Michael Childs named as recipient in Youth category**

*VANCOUVER, B.C. April 8, 2008 – Coast Mental Health announced the final of six award recipients of a 2008 Courage To Come Back Award. **Michael Childs of Burnaby** has been named as the 2008 Courage To Come Back Award recipient in the Youth category.*

On May 16, 2008, Michael Childs will walk across the stage at his high school graduation to receive his diploma with the rest of his class. A milestone along life's path, to be sure, but for Michael and his family, it will be a tremendous accomplishment. It wasn't so long ago that Michael couldn't walk at all, or even speak or feed himself. The journey he has made in a few short years is nothing less than courageous.

When Michael was 7, he sustained a terrible, traumatic head injury which resulted in secondary cerebral palsy. Rushed to hospital, he was put into the intensive care unit. For long agonizing months, he could neither speak, nor eat, nor move voluntarily – Michael couldn't even recognize his friends and family. He was agitated and frequently cried. He was scared.

Eventually, he was moved to a specialized facility where he began a year-long process of rehabilitation. Over time, slowly and painfully, he became more aware. His eyesight returned, he learned to swallow food again, and he learned to use a power wheelchair. Life would never be the same, but maybe it could go on.

Michael began to laugh at jokes again and to respond to yes/no questions with a nod or shake of the head. Better yet, his determination and never-give-up attitude began to return as he worked hard to regain his life. He began re-learning to walk using a standing frame walker, and returned to school. Over the course of one summer, he regained the power to speak. At his grade 7 graduation, he used his walker to accept the "Most Inspiring Student" award. The audience of students, teachers and parents gave him a standing ovation.

This year, he is on the Grad Council at Moscrop Secondary. Although he has only partial use of one hand, he attempts every task and perseveres at everything he tries. He mentors younger students, and is looking forward to his work experience at a seniors centre. At the beginning of the school year, he set a goal for himself of meeting as many people as he can because he wanted his grad year to be one to remember. Michael also demonstrates an amazing sense of social responsibility and is determined to give back to the community that has sustained him by volunteering regularly for organizations who have helped him along his path.

Because of his brain injury, Michael can get easily fatigued. But when he is rested and ready to go, nothing can hold him down. Indeed, it is hard to think of anything that could stop this remarkable young man. We at Coast are very proud to have Michael accept the Youth Courage To Come Back Award.

Michael will receive his Courage To Come Back Award at the 10th Anniversary gala dinner at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver on Thursday, May 8th. For more information, call 604-675-2327 or visit online at www.coastmentalhealth.com.

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Michael Childs named as recipient in CTCB Youth category

About Courage To Come Back:

The Courage To Come Back Awards celebrates its 10th Anniversary in 2008 recognizing people who have valuable lessons to share as they have courageously battled back from illness, adversity or injury. Through Courage, British Columbians are acknowledged for their accomplishments, positive attitudes and willingness to give back to their communities. Awards are given in six categories including: mental health, physical rehabilitation, medical, addiction, social adversity and youth. Since 1999, only 60 recipients have been chosen from over 1,400 nominations received across the province.

About Coast Mental Health:

Since 1974, the Coast Foundation Society has been providing high quality housing, employment programs, social opportunities and other community mental health services for people with serious and persistent mental illnesses. Coast Mental Health Foundation was formed in 2001 to raise funds for community mental health services and to educate the public about the needs of people with a serious mental illness.

Through presenting the stories of six amazing recipients each year at The Courage To Come Back Awards, Coast Mental Health Foundation strives to offer hope to all those suffering from illness, adversity or injury and demonstrate that all people have value and dignity.

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