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BC Government Budget Announces \$1 Million Grant for The Courage To Come Back Awards 10th Anniversary

Vancouver, BC; February 19, 2008 – The Government of British Columbia announced today that it will provide a \$1 million grant for an endowment fund to sustain The Courage To Come Back Awards.

“We are very pleased that the Province will ensure that Courage remains a legacy for all British Columbians. As we celebrate our 10th anniversary in 2008, we can move forward knowing that the stories of Courage recipients will continue to keep our province an humane, enlightened and caring community,” says Lorne Segal, Chair of the Courage To Come Back Awards Executive Committee. “While the stories of Courage recipients reach over a million people a year through our media partners, I am always personally moved by the positive role models that each person demonstrates. With the legacy endowment created by this grant, Courage will continue to showcase for decades to come ordinary British Columbians who have overcome extra-ordinary challenges.

Winton Derby, Chair of Coast Mental Health Foundation says, “In addition to being an important provincial event for the Foundation, Courage raises money to help Coast improve the lives of people recovering from a mental illness through supported housing, employment programs and important community services.”

Each year since 1999 The Courage To Come Back Awards has asked British Columbians to nominate people who have valuable lessons to share, as they have courageously battled back from illness, adversity or injury. “Through Courage, British Columbians acknowledge the positive attitudes of the people who have taken good out of difficult situations and have contributed to their communities,” says Darrell Burnham, Executive Director of Coast Mental Health.

Awards are given in six categories including: mental health, physical rehabilitation, medical, addiction, social adversity and youth. Since 1999, almost 1,500 nominations have been received from over 102 communities across the province. Each of the six categories has a Nomination Panel which reviews nominations and short-lists nominees. A Final Selection Panel then reviews the short-listed nominees and selects a recipient in each category. Hundreds of volunteers have participated in the nomination

process. Volunteers represent a broad cross-section of the community including experts in each category.

Since 1999, 54 recipients have courageously shared their stories on Global TV and in The Province newspaper. Each year six recipients are honoured at a Gala Dinner and this year's 10th Anniversary will be held Thursday May 8th at the Hyatt Regency in Vancouver with co-hosts Deborra Hope, Global TV Early News Anchor and Kevin Evans, former CBC British Columbia News Anchor.

2008 Courage partners include: Scotiabank, Weyerhaeuser, Global Television, The Province, News 1130, Telus, Blenz, Great-West Life, BC Housing, Spectra Energy, Providence Health Care, Provincial Health Services Authority, The BC Hydro Employees' Community Services Fund, Vancouver Coastal Health, Fairchild Media, TV Week and the Hyatt Regency Vancouver. They are joined by Peter Legge, CEO of Canada Wide Magazines, and long standing community leader who provides a special contribution to the financial success of the evening.

Since its inception Courage has now generated \$4 million in grants, donations, partnerships and ticket sales.

This Legacy Fund from the Province of British Columbia will underwrite the public education campaign that accompanies the telling of the recipient stories and the call nominations from across BC.

About Coast Mental Health Foundation:

The Coast Mental Health Foundation (CMHF) was formed in 2001 to raise funds for community mental health programs that make better mental health possible. The goal of CMHF is to increase assistance for programs that provide supported housing, employment and community services that help people living with a mental illness. CMHF's first responsibility is to build and sustain the resources needed to work towards universal access to these vital programs in our communities. Good mental health is a necessary requirement to overcome illness, adversity and injury. The stories of Courage recipients provide hope for the tens of thousands of people facing similar challenges.

More information can be found online at www.coastmentalhealth.com.

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