



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Health and Fitness Day Kicks Off Summer with Swim Day on the Hill

(Ottawa, May 18th, 2017) Parliamentarians and water-safety organizations joined together to mark the sixth annual Swim Day on the Hill in Ottawa. Use of life jackets and increased physical activity were the main messages delivered by an array of speakers – including Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, Lesley Anderson of the Canadian Red Cross, and Pierre Lafontaine, CEO of Cycling Canada and former Olympic swim coach.

A companion event to National Health and Fitness Day, which this year is Saturday, June 3rd, Swim Day on the Hill partnered with YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region, Canadian Red Cross, Swimming Canada, and Royal Life Saving Society Canada to promote swimming as an excellent, accessible form of physical activity and to raise awareness about the importance of safety when swimming, boating, or in any activity in which there is a risk of drowning.

This event, which purposely falls before the May Long Weekend, highlights the need for education surrounding swimming and boating safety. While swimming and boating are popular summer activities, tragically there are almost five hundred fatalities in Canada every year that could largely be avoided.

Quotes:

“Canada is blessed with beautiful, clean lakes and rivers for swimming. I hope all parents make sure that their children learn to swim, and learn about water safety,”

- Senator Nancy Greene Raine, BC

“Being on and in the water has always been a hugely important part of life in our country. I believe every child should learn how to swim so that all Canadians can stay safe and benefit from this perfect exercise all life long!”

- Hon. Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

“In promoting swimming and safe water practices, we will be ensuring countless Canadians can safely enjoy our beautiful lakes and waterways – while also creating a generation of healthier Canadians and inspiring young swimmers to reach international performance levels for Canada.”

- Pierre Lafontaine, CEO of Cycling Canada and former Olympic and National Swim Coach

“Red Cross Canada is proud to be a partner of Swim Day on the Hill. We will continue to promote the health benefits and safe swimming habits through our Red Cross Summer Swim programs, and initiatives like Swim Day on the Hill.”

- Lesley Anderson, Canadian Red Cross Spokesperson

Quick Facts:

- Swimming is a great form of moderate physical activity – adults need 2.5 hours of moderate activity per week. http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_PAGuidelines_adults_en.pdf
- Almost 500 Canadians drown each year – these deaths are often preventable with swimming lessons and proper water safety practices.
- Drowning is one of the leading causes of death amongst Canadian children under the age of five.
- http://www.redcross.ca/crc/documents/What-We-Do/Swimming-Water-Safety/Water-related_fatality_trends_Jun_2016_EN-PDF.pdf

Associated Links:

www.NHFDcan.ca



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Swim Day on the Hill 2017 attendees don life jackets to promote water safety and listen to Pierre Lafontaine encouraging them to work to make Canada the fittest nation on earth.

(photo credit: Chantale-Annick Desrosiers)

Left to right: Buckles, the Red Cross mascot; Lesley Anderson, Canadian Red Cross; Wendy Schultenkamper, Lifesaving Society; Martin Shields, MP, Bow River; Mathieu Fleury, City of Ottawa; Cheryl Hardcastle, MP, Windsor-Tecumseh; Bob Gallagher, YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region; Ahmed El-Awadi, Swimming Canada; Brigitte Sansoucy, MP, Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot; Robert Kitchen, MP, Souris-Moose Mountain; Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change; David Sweet, MP, Flamborough-Glanbrook; Bernard Genereux, MP, Montmagny-L'Islet-Kamouraska-Rivere-du-Loup; Carol Hughes, MP, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing; Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs; Andy Fillmore, MP, Halifax; Alistair MacGregor, MP, Cowichin-Malahat-Langford; Anthony Housefather, MP, Mount-Royal; Elizabeth May, MP, Saanich-Gulf Islands; Fin Donnelly, MP, Port Moody-Coquitlam; Paralympian Jessica Tuomela; Will Amos, MP, Pontiac; Pierre Lafontaine, CEO of Cycling Canada and National Health and Fitness Day Director.