



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

(Ottawa, May 9th, 2018) Parliamentarians and water safety organizations marked the seventh annual Swim Day on the Hill in Ottawa, an event that promotes health and fitness and water safety. Use of life jackets and increased physical activity were the main messages delivered by an array of speakers – including Anthony Housefather, MP for Mount Royal and Maccabiah Games Medalist, Lesley Anderson of the Canadian Red Cross, and Pierre Lafontaine, CEO of Cycling Canada and former coach of Canada’s Olympic Swim Team.

A companion event to National Health and Fitness Day, which this year is Saturday, June 2nd, Swim Day on the Hill partnered with YMCA/YWCA Canada, 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 stand up paddle boarding.

The event highlights the need for education surrounding swimming and water safety to decrease the almost five hundred tragic, yet often-avoidable, drowning fatalities that occur in Canada annually. By working together, we hope to eliminate drownings as we make Canada the fittest nation on earth!

Quotes:

"Many Canadians live close to natural lakes, rivers and oceans, or visit them in the summer holidays. Others take advantage of community swimming pools. I encourage everyone to learn to swim safely and with confidence."

- Senator Nancy Greene Raine, Olympic Champion

"In October 2017, the first edition of the Canadian Drowning Prevention Plan was released and highlights what Canadians can do to reduce drownings in their communities. Keep you and your family safe this summer by taking the Swim to Survive program which teaches how to survive an unexpected fall into the water."

- Wendy Schultenkamper, Royal Life Saving Society Canada

"Red Cross Canada is pleased to take the opportunity at Swim Day on the Hill to remind Canadians that before heading out on a boat this summer ensure that all persons on board - even strong swimmers - are outfitted with a correctly sized lifejacket appropriate to the activity."

- Lesley Anderson, Red Cross Canada

“As the weather warms up and Canadians turn to cottages, lakes, pools, rivers and beaches, we are reminded how important it is for every Canadian child to learn to swim. We encourage all parents to make their summer safer by enrolling children in lessons.”

- Ahmed El-Awadi, CEO of Swimming Canada

Quick Facts:

- Swimming is a great form of moderate physical activity – adults need at least 150 minutes 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
- The first edition of the Canadian Drowning Prevention Plan can be viewed on the Lifesaving Society Canada’s website at: <http://www.lifesaving.ca/canadian-drowning-prevention-plan-2/>

Associated Links:

www.NHFDcan.ca



For additional information, please contact:

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Pierre Lafontaine (Director, National Health and Fitness Day), Erin Mailloux and Lesley Anderson (Red Cross Canada), Elizabeth May MP for Schwartz Bay – Gulf Islands, Robert Kitchen MP for Souris – Mouse Mountain, John Gullick (Safe Boating Council of Canada), Marilyn McIvor (Coordinator, National Health and Fitness Day), Senator Nancy Greene Raine, Jay (Safe Boating council of Canada), Nathan White (Swimming Canada), Senator Marty Deacon, Sue Holloway, Alain Rayes MP for Richmond-Arthabaska, The Honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna MP Ottawa Central, Bob Gallagher YMCA/YWCA, John Weston (National Health and Fitness Day), Wendy Schultenkamper (Lifesaving Canada), Cheryl Hardcastle MP for Windsor-Tecumseh.