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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Be Visible and 'Think First' on Safe Communities Day

Wednesday, October 7, 2009 – Halifax NS – ThinkFirst Canada is very proud to partner with Canada's leading injury prevention organizations to reduce injury and make a long-term, significant impact on the health of communities across the country and on the lives of individual Canadians. As this new national campaign launches, ThinkFirst Canada encourages Canadians to Be Visible and to 'Think First' on Safe Communities Day.

"The Be Visible collaboration challenges Canadians to mobilize to fully address the devastating toll personal injury has on Canadians as well as acknowledge the burden of preventable suffering inflicted on our economy and quality of life as a nation." says Rebecca Nesdale-Tucker, ThinkFirst Canada's executive director. "ThinkFirst works to heighten the public's awareness of the devastating impact brain and spinal injuries have on a family, community and the country as a whole. We encourage Canadians to 'think first' by implementing injury prevention and reduction strategies in their everyday life."

Personal injury in Canada is one of the most serious public health issues facing our country. Preventable injury remains the leading cause of child and youth death and disability in Canada. The annual economic cost of injury in Canada is 19.8 billion dollars. Head injuries are among the most serious of these injuries and prevention is the only cure. Between the years of 2000-2001 to 2003-2004 there was a 46% increase in the number of hospitalizations for severe head injuries. The impact of these devastating injuries on families, friends, and communities is incalculable. The good news is that most of the injuries are preventable, and that injury prevention programs are beginning to work.

At the heart of ThinkFirst Canada are our 19 Chapters that stretch across the country from Vancouver to Toronto to St. John's. These Chapters are managed by volunteer neurosurgeons, neuroscience nurses and other healthcare and teaching professionals. Our Chapters spread ThinkFirst's injury prevention message through school and community presentations with the help of their VIPs (Voices for Injury Prevention), a dedicated group of injury survivors who share their own powerful story.

ThinkFirst Nova Scotia Chapter is a hospital-based injury prevention program in the Division of Neurosurgery at the QEII Health Sciences Centre, directed by Dr. Simon Walling (Neurosurgeon) and coordinated by Lynne Fenerty (Nurse). ThinkFirst Nova Scotia responds to many community and professional groups' requests for presentations on brain and spinal cord injury prevention, concussion management and helmet programs. ThinkFirst Nova Scotia partners with many Injury Prevention groups to deliver ThinkFirst programs.

ThinkFirst Canada is a national, Toronto-based charitable organization dedicated to preventing brain and spinal cord injury. Founded in 1992 by renowned neurosurgeon, Dr. Charles Tator, ThinkFirst Canada continues to be an injury prevention leader by providing kids and those who care about them with lifesaving information. We encourage Canadians to be active and to think first – by getting trained, wearing the gear and using wisdom to navigate risks.

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