

For Immediate Release

HIGH FIVE® National announces new agreement with Red Cross Ontario

Toronto, September 17, 2007 - HIGH FIVE® National, a division of Parks and Recreation Ontario, is pleased to announce an agreement with The Canadian Red Cross, Ontario Zone, to deliver Red Cross Assistant Water Safety Instructor/Water Safety Instructor training with HIGH FIVE® *Principles of Healthy Child Development (PHCD)* Certification.

HIGH FIVE® is Canada's only comprehensive quality standard for organizations providing recreation and sport programs to children aged 6 to 12. HIGH FIVE®'s child-centred approach makes a child's recreation and sport experience an affirmative one, which helps to strengthen participating organizations by entrenching quality as one of its core values.

The Canadian Red Cross Water Safety Services Program recognizes that children are an important and vulnerable population and that instructors working with children need training to effectively optimize development in middle childhood (ages 6 to 12). The collaboration between the Canadian Red Cross - Ontario Zone (Water Safety Services) and HIGH FIVE® National will improve existing programs for children by using a proven child-centred philosophy in an aquatic environment.

HIGH FIVE®'s training, tools, resources, and Accreditation process help organizations deliver positive child-centred programs. Embracing HIGH FIVE® and embedding its key ingredients into an organization's operating practices demonstrates a commitment to safe and healthy childhood development and a dedication to deliver programs of the highest standards.

HIGH FIVE® National is pleased to welcome Red Cross Ontario as an Affiliate Provider, giving thousands of Red Cross Water Safety Instructors the chance to broaden their credentials.

“Every child taught by those Instructors will benefit from their expertise and knowledge in child development.” says LJ Bartle, HIGH FIVE® National Manager. “Parents are more concerned than ever with quality and safety for their children, and the new HIGH FIVE® training being offered by Red Cross Ontario means that more children will learn to swim in a safe and fun environment. I encourage all parents to seek out Instructors trained in HIGH FIVE®”

HIGH FIVE® Ontario has more than 150 Registered Organizations, including municipalities, Boys and Girls Clubs and sport organizations committed to providing quality sport and recreation programming. Many are working toward HIGH FIVE® Accreditation which takes quality assurance to the highest level by ensuring the organization's policies and procedures support healthy child development.

The HIGH FIVE® quality standard is offered in other provinces and territories across Canada through Authorized Providers. This new Red Cross course is only being offered in Ontario.

The Canadian Red Cross – Ontario Zone (Water Safety Services) went through an equivalency process with HIGH FIVE® National to integrate HIGH FIVE® principles into its Assistant Water Safety Instructor training. All existing Water Safety Instructors will also have access to the upgraded course.

The Canadian Red Cross – Ontario Zone (Water Safety Services) will begin offering this blended training in the Fall of 2007, in a number of delivery formats for certification including an integrated approach, recertification and in-service training. This integration allows candidates to leverage already achieved outcomes toward completion of a HIGH FIVE® *Principles of Healthy Child Development (PHCD)* certificate.

The collaboration between the Canadian Red Cross - Ontario Zone (Water Safety Services) and HIGH FIVE® National is a small step toward the goal of assuring healthy child development for every participant and continuing to promote water safety for all children in Ontario.

BACKGROUND

The Canadian Red Cross is a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which includes the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and 185 national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Canadian Red Cross mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and around the world.

HIGH FIVE® is a quality standard of Parks and Recreation Ontario for children's sport and recreation programs. HIGH FIVE®'s PHCD is specialized training which teaches participants how to use the five principles of healthy child development to provide an exceptional learning experience for children in their care.

HIGH FIVE® is a quality standard committed to assisting children along the path of healthy child development by:

- ensuring that recreation and sport practitioners develop a high level of knowledge and expertise in child development;
- helping parents to make informed choices; and
- providing practitioners with the tools for enhancing and maintaining a high level of program quality.

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) is an all-inclusive member-based association dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of the people in Ontario.

-30-

For more information please contact:

Diane English, Communications Officer
Parks and Recreation Ontario
phone: 416-426-7306/email: denglish@prontario.org

N:\Communication tools\Press Releases\HIGH FIVE MIT Bulletin Sept 2007.doc