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December 3 International Day for the Disabled

Kenora and Ontario Contribute Internationally

Kenora, December 1 2006

In anticipation of the annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons, December 3, the Kenora Association for Community Living forwarded a cheque for \$900 to Kenora's affiliated national body, the Canadian Association for Community Living. The funds donated by KACL staff and members of the public were specifically donated for work with the disabled on the international scene. The Canadian Association for Community Living in turn will forward the funds to Inclusion Interamericana, the Inter-American Confederation of Inclusion International which promotes respect human rights and inclusion where people with intellectual disabilities and their families can equally participate and be valued citizens in all aspects of community life.

The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons, December 3, is intended to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

James Retson, Executive Director of the Kenora Association for Community Living and one of the contributor of the funds himself indicated that he was proud of the contributions that Canadians made to promoting the rights of the disabled. In particular he noted the contributions of Canadians in the negotiation and wording of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recently approved August 25 2006. In the original draft of the convention the convention was going to protect guardianship rather than supported decision making. The Canadian Delegation had decided that if other delegates would not agree to the supportive decision making provisions they would withdraw. Mr Retson supporting the Canadian position indicated,

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“In Canada we regard equal treatment under the law as insufficient to constitute a constitutional democracy – we must be able to understand ourselves as the authors of our laws and the decision makers of individual choices to the extent we are able.”

The Convention states that persons with disabilities have the right to live independently and be included in the community, with the opportunity to choose where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others.

In commenting on the need to support the disabled at the international level Mr. Retson made reference to a recent play put on by Trilight Theater in Kenora:

. “If one of us in trouble, all of us is in trouble. We live in a Global Village”

Donations for the work for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, either local or internationally may be made to the Kenora Association for Community Living 501 Eighth Ave S. Kenora Ontario. P9N 3Z9

Additional Information on Kenora Association for Community Living

Kenora Association for Community Living was originally formed as a Parent Advocacy group in 1960. It became an affiliated member of the Ontario Association for Retarded Children (currently Community Living Ontario) in April 1961. It became incorporated on December 27 1963 as the Kenora-Keewatin District Association for Mentally Retarded Children. It changed its name to Kenora Association for Community Living in 1986 to reflect current attitudes with respect to negative labels for persons with special needs.

Mission Statement: The mission statement of KACL is to ensure that all people with special needs have the opportunity to live a meaningful and satisfying lifestyle and interact as an equal in their community by providing continuing opportunities for

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personal growth through education, training, support, advocacy and an informed public.

Membership is open to persons who support the mission of the Association.

Programs offer planning; support and individualized funding to persons with special needs include adult community, residential and vocational support programs for persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Illnesses, Children and Youth Programs, and a Kids Zone Day Care Program