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**Kenora Association for Community Living Receives \$45,000 Trillium Grant**

**Community Wellness Program**

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**Kenora, December 8<sup>th</sup> 2006**

The Kenora Association for Community Living is pleased to announce its success application for a \$45,000 grant to reduce barriers and provide recreation and fitness opportunities for people with developmental and mental illness disabilities and seniors on low income in the community.

The grant which will extend over 18 months will fund an enhanced Wellness program that began last year with a short term grant from the Ministry of Health Promotions Branch, Communities in Action Fund and the Kenora District Service Board.

A Luncheon honouring both the Trillium Foundation and the City of Kenora whose recreational staff has contributed substantially in the past in breaking down barriers will be held Friday in the Rotary Room at The Kenora Wellness Center.

The Trillium Foundation is providing funds for this initiative to support healthier and more physically active Ontarians because it will promote physical activities for people of all ages and abilities, one priority of the foundation.

This grant will support the second phase of the initiative of the Kenora Association for Community Livings' Community Mental Health Program, to increase involvement of under represented groups in physical and inclusive recreation in the city. Mr Retson Executive Director of the Association reported that 45 persons participated in various organized activities from March 2006 to August 2006. Popular activities included bowling, Aqua-fit, walking group, Strength and Cardio Conditioning group, Yoga class, Baseball and self defence classes. Phase 1 ran on a budget of approximately 20,000 over 7 months. Phase 2 will operate on much larger budget over 18 months and is hoped to have a permanent effect of the health and wellness of the participants

## *Community Living in Kenora Month*

The project was developed by the Associations' Community Mental Health Program to provide opportunities for increased recreation and active leisure among vulnerable adults in the Kenora Municipal area. The project intends to achieve this goal through developing activity groups, reducing the barriers and providing motivational support to keep people involved. The vulnerable group consisted of adults with physical and intellectual disabilities, seniors in a low income category and adults with mental illnesses and acquired brain injuries. All or most of the people involved were financially dependant on Ontario disability support program, Ontario Works or Old age Pension. The hope is that eventually this group will achieve similar degrees of participation as the larger population of Kenora from which they are drawn.

From Phase 1 the Association learned the following:

1. That relationship motivates people to become and stay active.
2. That wellness is expensive and for vulnerable people the cost of participation in activities of choice is prohibitive
3. That by reducing the barriers and providing a variety of activity options vulnerable people who are not active will become active
4. That a commitment to wellness empowers individuals to take control of their lives and influences the decisions that affect their lives
5. That wellness encompasses an individuals whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community providing meaningful opportunities for personal well-being
6. That by focusing on wellness not illness or disability people found new life roles such as friend, care giver, team member and coach.
7. That respect of one requires inclusion and participation in all aspects of life - physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual.

While Mr Retson indicated that the costs of recreational activity continued to pose a barrier to full inclusion in a lot of organized physical activity in the City, he praise the City of Kenora and in particular the Recreational Center staff for progress made during the last few years for greater inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized adults. While many complain about the failures of institutions such as Schools, Churches and Government to serve and include the marginalized, he believed at times that we have to also stop and celebrate what is right with the world.

Supplemental Material for the Trillium Foundation and the Kenora Association for Community Living
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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 as well as to recognize that it served a population which included persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with mental illnesses and children.

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

Membership is open to persons who support the mission of the Association. Programs offering planning, support and individualized funding to persons with intellectual disabilities including adult community residential and vocational support programs; Support to Persons with Mental Illnesses and Children and Youth Programs. The Association also sponsors the very popular Kids Zone Daycare Program in Lakeside and Ecole Ste Marguerite Bourgeoys.

The Kids Zone program currently supports 10 Toddlers (18 months to 2.5 years), 20 juniors (2.5 to 4 years) and 38 seniors (4 years to 6 years) in the winter months and 48 in the summer. It also includes another 30 children in Before and After Programs for 6 to 10 year olds.