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For Immediate Release

NEWS

Laughter and Confidence Gained as Newcomer Youth Master Ice Skating through local *Stride and Glide* Program.

London, ON – Shrieks of laughter can be heard across Carling Arena as forty-five new Canadian youth spill out onto the ice for a one hour skating lesson. The youth are part of a new twelve week program called *Stride and Glide*, facilitated by the London InterCommunity Health Centre and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion.

Stride and Glide has created the opportunity for immigrant youth from low-income families to master a popular Canadian winter activity. In addition to the benefits of healthy physical activity and injury prevention education, learning a recreational skill that is strongly linked to Canada's culture engenders a sense of community belonging in newcomer youth.

"*Stride and Glide* builds character!" says Greg Nash, Team Lead of the Health Centre's Children Youth and Family Program. "Trying something new, falling then falling again, learning then improving – these are all significant positive youth development experiences."

Most of the youth participating in the program live in the city's northeast where nearly one in five residents were born outside of Canada and where income levels are as much as 40% less than the city average. Without this program, the barriers of income, family responsibilities, lack of transportation and difficulty with language and discrimination would make learning to skate nearly impossible.

Says participant Prakash Timsina, an eighteen year old from Nepal, "of course, we didn't have skating back home. I couldn't skate at all the first day, but now I just want to go fast all the time!"

Adds Elvis Birindwa, "I wanted to skate because every kid in Canada knows how to skate. This will help me to play hockey – I just want to play every sport!"

The Health Centre has taken a lead role in the organization and facilitation of this project. Support from community partners Pathways, LUSO Community Services, the City of London and the Life Resources Centres have made it a success. A partnership with Source for Sports made the dream of providing each participant with a new pair of skates and a helmet a reality.

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“This program has really brought schools, community, business and families together in a most positive way to strengthen the character of newcomer youth,” adds Nash.

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Skating Party and Media Event:

Wednesday December 1, 2010
3 – 4:30pm
Official Remarks at 3:15
Carling Arena Community Room

Bring your skates and join our youth on the ice from 3:30 – 4:30

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