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Canadian Association for Community Living
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A good day to be Canadian

Winnipeg, Manitoba, February 24, 2012 – Today, the Government of Saskatchewan announced the closure of Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw. Today, the Government of Saskatchewan announced a closure of a dark period for persons with intellectual disabilities. Today, Saskatchewan is confirming what many already know - that people, all people, belong in the community, not in an institution.

Valley View Centre is an institution that has housed thousands of people with intellectual disabilities over the past 50 years, and which today still houses more than 200 people. The announcement was made today by Social Services Minister the Honorable June Draude.

“It is a great day to be Canadian,” stated Shane Haddad, President of People First of Canada (PFC). “I am so proud to have been part of the work and education it took to free people from this institution. I commend the Saskatchewan government for doing the right thing for the people who live and have lived in Valley View Centre. I am so proud my province is moving forward.”

“This is a milestone for so many people, on so many levels,” said Laurie Larson, President of the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL). “People will now be able to reclaim their rightful place in community; and equally important no other citizen of Saskatchewan with an intellectual disability will ever again face the possibility of being institutionalized in Valley View. A historic day for Saskatchewan, indeed a historic day for all of Canada.”

Shelley Fletcher Rattai, Executive Director (PFC), said “This brings another province into accord with those who have already closed their large institutions for people with intellectual disabilities. As a country, we are moving closer to the reality promised within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – especially Article 19, the right to live in community.”

“Today represents a major victory for human rights in our country.” commented Dr. Michael Bach, Executive Vice President (CACL). “Saskatchewan, through this announcement, affirms its commitment to ensuring the rights of all its citizens; rights that have too long been denied to residents of Valley View.”

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People First of Canada is the national voice of people who have been labelled with an intellectual disability. The vision of People First is to see all citizens living equally in the community. For further information contact Shelley Fletcher Rattai, Executive Director for People First of Canada Phone: 204-784-7362 or by Email: srattai@peoplefirstofcanada.ca Find out more at www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

The Canadian Association for Community Living is a Canada-wide association of family members and others working to advance the human rights and inclusion of persons of all ages who have an intellectual disability. Founded in 1958 by parents of children with intellectual disabilities who wanted supports and services within the community instead of in institutions, CACL has become one of Canada's ten largest charitable organizations, and has grown into a federation of 10 provincial and three territorial associations comprising of 420 local associations and over 40,000 members.

For more information, please contact:

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