



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAN'T STOP! WON'T STOP MAKING A DIFFERENCE! Pride Float Brings Two Powerful Canadian Charities Together To Fight Global Pandemics

CANFAR and SPREAD THE NET team together with Rick Mercer and Belinda Stronach to act locally for a global impact

Thursday, June 25, 2009 (Toronto, ON) – On Sunday, June 28, 2009, as part of Toronto's 29th Annual Pride Festival celebration, the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR) and *Spread the Net* (StN) are teaming up for this year's Pride Parade to help raise awareness and fight the spread of two global pandemics – AIDS and malaria.

Spread the Net co-founders, The Honourable Belinda Stronach and comedian Rick Mercer will be on the float in support of these vital causes. Joining the line-up of community, business and public leaders who will be on the Pride float or marching with the contingent is Paul Venoit, celebrity hair and make-up artist and *Spread the Net* ambassador. CANFAR Board of Directors President Jason Stewart will march with National Bank Financial Inc., a proud corporate supporter of CANFAR and their goal to end AIDS through research.

"Malaria and HIV are two of the biggest health issues of our time but we know that they can be prevented and treated. By partnering with CANFAR during Toronto's Pride celebrations we hope to bring awareness to help fund crucial research related to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS as well as malaria." says Ms. Stronach, co-founder, *Spread the Net* and chair, The Belinda Stronach Foundation. "We applaud the many individuals who are doing their part to help in the ongoing fight to end these diseases."

This year marks CANFAR's 22nd year of leading AIDS research in Canada. AIDS (Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) describes the group of diseases, malignancies and infections associated with acquired deficiency of the immune system. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. The term AIDS applies to the most advanced stages of HIV infection. The majority of people infected with HIV, if not treated, will develop AIDS and die of the disease.

"Canada is fortunate to host some of the top HIV/AIDS researchers in the world and has the highest impact per dollar spent, however, due to lack of funding, the actual dollar spent per researcher is low so the impact is limited," says Kerry Whiteside, Executive Director, CANFAR. "In other words, funding is critical. CANFAR remains the only private sector channel to support the advancement of HIV/AIDS research in Canada and each year they receive far more applications from Canadian HIV/AIDS researchers than their funding pool can accommodate so getting this message out to the public is important."

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“Malaria kills an African child every 30 seconds but it doesn’t have to be that way.,” says Tiffani Steer, Director of Programs, The Belinda Stronach Foundation. “A simple \$10 bed net can make all the difference. Thanks to the generosity of Canadians, 376,600 anti-malaria bed nets have been delivered but more help is needed to hit the founding goal of 500,000 nets. Remember 1 Net. 10 Bucks. Save Lives!”

Pride Parade 2009, “CAN’T STOP, WON’T STOP” begins at 2 pm – Sunday, June 28th and travels west on Bloor Street between Church and Yonge, south on Yonge Street from Bloor to Gerrard, and east on Gerrard Street to Church.

About CANFAR

Founded in 1987, the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research raises awareness to generate funds for research into all aspects of HIV and AIDS.

The only organization in Canada that operates for the sole purpose of privately funding HIV/AIDS research, CANFAR finances institution-based AIDS researchers at educational, hospital and health facilities, research institutes, and established community service organizations across Canada. To date, CANFAR has provided more than \$15 million to HIV/AIDS research projects.

For more information on CANFAR: Ending AIDS through research visit www.CANFAR.com .

About *Spread the Net*

Spread the Net is a grassroots, largely web-based campaign designed to educate, motivate and inspire Canadians to help eradicate malaria by fundraising to support the purchase and distribution of \$10 anti-malarial bed nets to children and families in Liberia and Rwanda. *Spread the Net* was founded in November 2006 by The Honourable Belinda Stronach and comedian Rick Mercer and is powered by an innovative partnership with UNICEF Canada.

For more information on *Spread the Net* please visit www.spreadthenet.org .

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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