

Access to a defibrillator saves Man's Life at BMO Field

Toronto, A fortunate citizen is alive today thanks to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario (HSFO) and Toronto EMS Cardiac Safe City Public Access Defibrillator Program.

The person collapsed at BMO Field on the morning of March 7. An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) was used by Fernand Grupe and two others who had been trained by Toronto EMS in the use of the device as part of the Cardiac Safe City program. They provided emergency care until the Paramedics arrived. The patient responded to treatment and Toronto EMS's Advanced Care Paramedics ultimately ended up transporting the patient to a local hospital.

"Although AEDs are simple for

any bystander to use, in this case it was people who had taken training through our Toronto EMS Safe City Program," says Toronto EMS Chief Paul Raftis. "With their training and willingness to help they started the chain of events to make this a success story".

The placement of the AED and training of the staff were the result of the Heart&Stroke Restart a Heart, a Life program and the Heart&Stroke Chase McEachern Tribute Fund and our partnership with the Toronto EMS Cardiac Safe City Public Access Defibrillator Program which has helped placed 257 AEDs in public venues across the City of Toronto.

Research shows that up to 85 per cent of cardiac arrests occur at

home or in public places and almost half are witnessed by a family member or friend. In Ontario alone, approximately 7,000 cardiac arrests occur every year. The survival rate of victims for an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is less than five per cent. However, the use of an AED with CPR before the arrival of Emergency Medical Services can increase the chance of survival by up to 75 per cent.

For more information on the Heart&Stroke Restart a Heart, a Life program and the Heart&Stroke Chase McEachern Tribute Fund, please visit: heartandstroke.ca/restart. For more information on Toronto EMS' Cardiac Safe City Program visit: <http://www.cardiac-safety.org>. ■

Islamic Congress Joins Canadians to Express Concern and Condolences for Victims of Japan's Earthquake-Tsunami Disaster

The Canadian Islamic Congress today urged its membership and all Canadians to offer prayers and condolence for the people of Japan, after this morning's devastating earthquake and tsunami that ravaged more than 2100 kilometres of the island nation's coastline.

As reports of rising numbers of dead and injured continued to pour in to news media following the 8.9 Richter-scale quake - one of the six largest in recorded global history - CIC national

president Mrs. Wahida Valiante expressed feelings shared the world over:

"Words cannot fully convey the deep sympathy and sadness we feel at the horrifying loss of life, property, livelihoods and infrastructure; and the long-term suffering the Japanese people will face before they can rebuild their country," she said. "At times like this, we must come together like the human family we really are and do what we can to help." ■

Disasters around the world a harsh reminder of the importance of being Emergency ready here at Home

In light of recent natural disasters and crises in other countries, the City of Toronto's Office of Emergency Management is encouraging Toronto residents to take steps to be prepared for any emergency situation.

"The recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the earlier earthquake in New Zealand show that an emergency can occur any time and any place - often without warning," said Loretta Chandler, Director of the Office of Emergency Management. "It's important that we understand the

risks and prepare ourselves and our families for any emergency that we might face in Toronto."

Being "emergency ready" means that you should have a plan so you and your family know what to do in an emergency. You should have an emergency kit - at home, at work and in your vehicle - with food, water and supplies to last at least 72 hours. Having insurance is also important to help protect your family and your home.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, you may need to look after your personal needs and those

of your family for up to 72 hours after an emergency occurs. Emergency services personnel may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may have to focus their initial efforts elsewhere. You may need to evacuate your home with little or no notice, or you might be asked to "shelter in place" with little or no access to external sources of food, water and other supplies.

More information about how you can prepare for an emergency is available on the Office of Emergency Management's website at <http://www.toronto.ca/oem>. ■

NDP's Pension Bill Passes Key Vote in Parliament

Only one hurdle left for severance pay to employees: Rafferty

OTTAWA - Bill C-501, sponsored by NDP MP John Rafferty (Thunder Bay-Rainy River), passed another key vote in the House of Commons last Wednesday by a 164 to 119 margin. The bill, which would secure the severance and termination pay of workers when a company enters restructuring or bankruptcy, has one vote left to pass in the House of Commons before it moves into the Senate.

"I'm very pleased. We are making some good progress on this bill,

and I am hopeful that it will be in the Senate before the summer," Rafferty said. "We've worked hard to put workers at the front of the line of creditor claims when a company fails. We're almost there."

Despite the passage of C-501 at the Report Stage of the bill, Rafferty said he was disappointed that the Conservatives are still running interference on the bill and trying to defeat it.

When originally tabled, Rafferty's C-501 proposed granting

pension plans and the severance/termination pay of workers 'secured' creditor status and put them at the front of the line during bankruptcy proceedings, but Conservative MPs teamed with those from the Bloc Quebecois to remove all mention of pensions from the bill during committee hearings. With the successful vote today just one more legislative hurdle remains for Bill C-501.

It must pass the vote at Third Reading in the House before heading to the Senate. ■

CIBC gives Canadians a 'once in a lifetime' chance to dance on stage at the IIFA Awards show in Toronto

TORONTO, CIBC (TSX: CM) (NYSE: CM) announces an exciting dance competition that will put two lucky Canadians on stage at the 2011 International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards in Toronto this June. The top male and female contestants in the CIBC IIFA Bollywood Moves Dance Competition will win an exciting experience at one of the world's most watched awards shows.

The CIBC IIFA Bollywood Moves Dance Competition invites Canadians to register for the dance competition and submit a one-minute video of themselves dancing to Indian music found online at www.cibciifa.com. The Top 10 contestants selected will take part in the CIBC IIFA Bollywood Moves Dance Competition Finale on June 11 at Yonge and Dundas Square in Toronto.

The top female and top male selected at the Finale event by a panel of three expert judges will each win the opportunity to dance on stage at the IIFA Awards show on June 25, 2011.

The prize includes rehearsals with the IIFA dance troupe in preparation for the awards show, hotel accommodation, meals and airfare. Please visit www.cibciifa.com for details and rules. The competition closes on April 29, 2011.

"CIBC is excited to launch this competition that will offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to dance on the IIFA stage in Toronto and attend the after party with the stars," said Stephen Forbes, CIBC's Executive Vice-President of Marketing, Communications & Public Affairs. "CIBC is proud to be the presenting sponsor of the IIFA Awards in June and we are

thrilled to be able to offer CIBC clients and all Canadians this chance to take part in the excitement of the IIFA Awards weekend in premium style."

In addition to the CIBC IIFA Bollywood Moves Dance Competition, the CIBC IIFA Golden Ticket Contest offers current and new CIBC clients the opportunity to win 1 of 5 VIP weekends for two to the 2011 IIFA weekend events in Toronto when they purchase or apply for a CIBC qualifying product. Visit www.cibciifa.com to enter the contest.

The IIFA Awards, fondly known as the 'Bollywood Oscars', are the annual awards for India's global movie industry. The event, taking place in North America for the first time, is expected to attract over 40,000 visitors to Toronto as well as a global audience of 600 million viewers. ■

Local Humanity First Team is on site to Assist in Relief Work in Japan

Concord, Ontario, Canada - An earthquake of 8.9-magnitude struck Japan on Friday around the eastern coast affecting many cities and tearing apart homes, highways and bridges with a current death toll of hundreds which is expected to rise.

The earthquake was strongest ever recorded and has resulted in seven meters high tsunami causing havoc in vast areas followed for hours by more than 50 aftershocks, many of them of more than magnitude 6.0.

Humanity First has alerted its Disaster Response Team and volunteers are on standby for deployment while further assessment is being done by our local team in Japan

who travelled more than 7 hours to reach the affected area.

Humanity First is also accepting donations for the relief work. People may go on our website www.humanityfirst.ca to donate online or they can send cheques to Humanity First.

Humanity First has also recently responded to the natural disasters in Haiti, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines and Indonesia. Currently Humanity First is working on the long term rehabilitation phase in Haiti and Pakistan after the recent earthquake and floods.

For further information, please visit our website at www.humanityfirst.ca. ■

National Muslim civil rights organization condemns vandalism of Port Coquitlam Mosque

Ottawa, The Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) condemns last Thursday's vandalism of the Port Coquitlam Mosque. According to a report the vandalism included graffiti with a racial slur. CAIR-CAN applauds the Port Coquitlam Police's decision to investigate this incident as a potential hate crime and hopes that the perpetrators are swiftly brought to justice.

"Attacks on any place of worship are deeply offensive and hurtful. Islam promotes social justice, peaceful relations and understanding with our neighbours. Unfortunately, these incidents which target Muslims and members of other faith groups continue. As a response CAIR-CAN, in solidarity with fellow Canadians, earlier this year issued a Statement on the Sanctity of Sacred Spaces," said

Ihsaan Gardee, CAIR-CAN Executive Director.

"We call on politicians, security officials and community leaders in Port Coquitlam to stand firm against all forms of hate, racism and xenophobia. These acts and the physical damage they cause represent cowardly attempts to intimidate and divide communities by further stigmatizing visible and vulnerable minorities."

"While very troubling, CAIR-CAN does not believe such incidents represent the sentiments of the vast majority of Canadians and we ask our fellow citizens of conscience to join us in condemning this act." "Furthermore we urge mosque leaders and officials to remain vigilant and to immediately report suspicious behaviour to CAIR-CAN and the proper authorities, in order to establish a clear record of such incidents." ■

81 Per Cent of High School Students Graduating

72,000 More Students Succeed In Ontario High Schools

Ontario is becoming even more competitive now that more students are graduating from high school.

Graduation rates have risen in each of the last six years - going from 68 per cent in 2003-04 to 81 per cent in 2009-10. That's an increase of 13 percentage points.

The increased graduation rate means about 72,000 more students have graduated than otherwise

would have if rates had remained at the 2003-2004 level.

Programs such as Specialist High Skills Majors are one way the government is helping students stay in school and graduate.

Building a well-educated work force that helps Ontario compete in the global economy is part of Ontario's plan to open the door to a bright future for high school graduates. ■