

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **INSPIRED EVENING RAISES \$50,000 FOR NEW REACH BUILDING**

On Saturday February 23<sup>rd</sup> the community gathered amongst glitter and stars to help raise funds for a new centre in Ladner for children and youth with special needs. Reach Child and Youth Development Society and Charitable Foundation debuted its Reach for the Stars: An Evening of Inspiration fundraising event benefitting the *Building for Children Together* capital building project. The evening was a great success in its first year, exceeding its goal by raising approximately \$50,000 towards the new centre.

Over 250 guests filled the star-cloaked Sacred Heart School gym and were treated to a night of fun, fundraising and inspiration. Chris Gailus, News Hour Anchor, Global BC Television emceed the event and helped Ian Paton with the live auction adding he was “proud to be a part of the event and such a worthy cause.” Distinguished guests included Vicky Huntington, MLA- Delta South and Delta Mayor Lois Jackson, as well as Delta Councilors, members of the Delta School District, Ministry For Children and Family Development, families and members from the Delta service club and business community.

Reach Executive Director Renie D’Aquila welcomed guests and thanked the over 70 volunteers and host of sponsors who made the event possible. Events sponsors included Westshore Terminals, Canadian Autoparts Toyota (CAPTIN), Delta Cable, Robertson Optical, Fraser Surrey Docks, TSI, Fraser River Pile & Dredge, Century Group, MK Delta Lands, Coast Capital, Grosvenor, Envision, Safeway, VanCity, John’s Thistle Auto, Delco Delta Container, Odlum Brown, Delta Speed Pro Signs, and media sponsors the Delta Optimist and South Delta Leader.

“As I look around the room,” D’Aquila added, “it warms my heart to see so many people here from all walks of life joining together tonight to help vulnerable children.”

Guests mingled at the cocktail reception over the lively tunes of local jazz ensemble Half A Metric Ton, and browsed over 80 auction items donated by businesses and individuals from all over Delta, Surrey and Langley.

Highlights of the evening included inspiring stories from two families with children who have special needs who spoke about their challenges and the success they have experienced with the support of Reach. A third speaker Myles McKie received a standing ovation for his talk about living with autism and how Reach and others have helped him achieve his goals.

After the speeches the crowd was treated to a five song set by young musicians Marshall Forsythe and Josh Somers. Forsythe and Somers both have special needs and have been through a variety of Reach programs. Forsythe told the crowd “Reach is not just a place, it’s a family. We love you all so very much.”

Reach Child and Youth Development Society have been helping children with special needs for over 50 years, and today serves close to 1,000 children with developmental disabilities, including children with Autism, Down Syndrome and FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). Reach has formed a Foundation which, along with their partners the Kinsmen Club of Ladner Tsawwassen, is raising \$4 million to build a new, community-based child development centre in central Ladner. The new centre will be built on land donated by the Municipality of Delta

and will include therapy rooms, a large community events room with a teaching kitchen, and an inclusive preschool with an accessible outdoor playground that will be open for all of the community to enjoy. The new central location will be much easier for families to access, and the building will be 60% larger than Reach's current facility helping to provide more programs for children and youth who are waiting for services.

Reach Foundation Chair, Barbara Wallick said "We are on our way to Reaching our goal of raising \$4 million and I would like to thank everyone who attended Reach for the Stars. A big thank you to all the volunteers who put the event together, it truly was magical. Each dollar raised means we get one step closer to building the new centre."

Reach is planning on making the Reach for the Stars: An Evening of Inspiration an annual event helping the Foundation to raise the funds needed for the new centre. For more information about Reach Child and Youth Development Society and the *Building for Children Together* project visit [www.reachdevelopment.org](http://www.reachdevelopment.org) or call 604-946-6622 ext. 301

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