



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health Proudly Announces the 2015 Champions of Mental Health Awards Recipients

(Ottawa, Ontario) March 30, 2015. Today, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) officially announced the winners of the *Champions of Mental Health Awards* for 2015. The *Champions of Mental Health Awards* are one of Canada's premiere social and advocacy events, which brings together political decision makers, business leaders, members of the national media, sponsors and other stakeholders to celebrate individuals and organizations whose impressive contributions have advanced the mental health agenda in Canada.

"Each year I am thrilled to see how much work is being done in reducing the stigma associated with mental illness," stated Florence Budden, CAMIMH Campaign Chair 2015. "The decision process of the Champions is certainly challenging because of the candidates' outstanding contributions in the service of mental health."

CAMIMH will host the gala celebrating the recipients and recognizing their hard work on May 5th, 2015 at the Shaw Centre in Ottawa. The celebration is presented by Bell as part of the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative.

The winners of the 2015 Champions of Mental Health Awards are:

Community (Individual): Mr. Robb Nash is a musician who altered his own course to stardom following a serious accident. He now uses his talent and experience to speak with students in schools, youth detention facilities and First Nations communities across Canada, inspiring them to live lives of purpose. Using the power of music and story, Robb speaks to students about difficult topics such as bullying, addiction, hopelessness, self harm and suicide. He is an innovative leader in the field of youth mental health, and has brought a message of hope and purpose to almost 1 million young people across the country.

Community (Organization): DIFD is a youth initiative run out of The Royal, which aims to support programs and initiatives in youth mental health, and most specifically suicide prevention. The organization was founded by Luke and Stephanie Richardson following the tragic loss of their daughter, Daron, to suicide.

Media: Mr. Ted Michaels is a newscaster on AM 900 CHML radio in Hamilton, Ontario and is the voice helping to reduce the stigma around mental illness with his radio series, *Wellness Wednesdays*.

Research/Clinician: Carol Hopkins is the Executive Director of the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation. Carol has been committed to raising awareness of the foundational role of Indigenous culture in addressing substance use and mental health issues among First Nations in Canada.

Parliamentarian: Senator Denise Batters has been an active supporter of mental health and suicide prevention. In the past five years, she has organized several charity events in honour of her late husband, former Member of Parliament Dave Batters, who suffered from anxiety and depression and died by suicide in 2009.

Workplace Mental Health: Spectra Energy launched its "Open Minds" wellness program in 2014 for its 3700 employees in Canada. The program's success centers around customized workplace mental health

training, broad awareness campaigns and wide-ranging resources for employees, leaders and their families.

Youth: Mr. Patrick Hickey is a grade 12 student in St-John's, Newfoundland and co-chair of "Mental Health Matters – a whisper to a scream," a provincial mental wellness conference hosted by Holy Heart of Mary. Patrick also sits on the steering committee for the Community Coalition For Mental Health as the Youth Outreach coordinator.

"Year after year we are pleased to honor such exceptional people and groups. Because of their devotion and commitment, mental health in Canada will become a national priority," concluded Budden.

Tickets and tables for the gala are on sale now! To purchase tickets for the awards please visit camimh.ca. The *Champions Awards* are a success each year thanks to the generous support of our corporate sponsors, in particular Bell, Lundbeck Canada, The Mental Health Commission of Canada, and Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D)

-30-

Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of mental health organizations comprised of health care providers and organizations representing persons with mental illness and their families and caregivers. CAMIMH's mandate is to ensure that mental health is placed on the national agenda so that persons with a lived experience of mental illness and their families receive appropriate access to care and support.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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