



MEDIA RELEASE

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WinSport launches proactive free program to get kids active

Calgary – WinSport Canada is proud to announce today that it is taking a lead role in bucking the bleak trend of inactivity among Canadian kids, by helping thousands of Calgary area students get their weekly recommended physical activity in just one day – and at WinSport's expense.

The day after Active Healthy Kids gave Canadian kids a failing grade in its annual Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, WinSport Canada is offering Grade 1 through Grade 6 classes free participation in WinSport's winter schools program for a full-day visit during the 2012-13 season. The day includes free lift tickets, free rentals and a free lesson for all skiers and snowboarders, removing the financial barrier for many local families.

According to the annual report, only seven per cent of Canadian kids are meeting Canadian guidelines of 60 minutes of physical activity each day, while 46% of Canadian kids aged 6-11 get three hours or less of active play each week (unstructured physical activity). WinSport Canada already introduces more than 25,000 people to winter sport each year, and continues to be at the forefront of encouraging kids to become physically active and to build the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.

"WinSport Canada recognizes its responsibility to directly assist children to become and remain physically active," said WinSport's vice-president for sport, Dr. Stephen Norris. "The Grade 1 to 6 winter schools initiative is an important step in WinSport's commitment to ensuring that actions speak louder than words."

The program, which coincides with the 25th anniversary of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games, helps solidify the Canadian Winter Sport Institute as Canada's centre of excellence to discover, develop and excel in winter sport.

Although Calgary area teachers recognized the benefits of physical activity in a recent survey conducted by WinSport, cost was considered a major barrier to bringing their respective classes to the park. Combined with improved on-hill programming and safety with a stronger instructor to student ratio, the new program is being welcomed by Calgary area educators.

"The Calgary Board of Education truly appreciates the opportunity for all students to participate in an activity that is a part of life in Calgary," said Marsha Levy, system principal for the Calgary Board of Education. "We are pleased that this opportunity supports active living through a fun sport and has eliminated financial barriers."

The Calgary Catholic School District also lauds the new program, which builds on the existing school program that sees more than 15,000 student visits to Canada Olympic Park each winter to ski or snowboard.

"With this initiative, WinSport Canada is offering students the chance to experience winter sport by removing some of the barriers that might otherwise prevent them from doing so," said Steve Laberge, vice-principal of Our Lady of the Assumption School. "What a wonderful way of getting kids out in the fresh air while allowing them the chance to participate in activities they may well enjoy the rest of their lives."

School bookings can be made online at winsportcanada.ca/schools or by phone at 403-247-5452 beginning June 4.

WinSport Canada

The Canadian Winter Sport Institute provides world-class sport facilities where Canadian athletes can discover, develop and excel. WinSport Canada owns and operates Canada Olympic Park in Calgary, Alta., the Bill Warren Training Centre located at the Canmore Nordic Centre and the Beckie Scott High Performance Training Centre on Haig Glacier, Alta. A not-for-profit organization, WinSport Canada supports national sport organizations, encourages educational opportunities and subsidizes the operation of unique training and recreational facilities used by the nation's top athletes and the general public. For more information on WinSport Canada please visit www.winsportcanada.ca.

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