

MEDIA RELEASE
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MAJOR LITERACY GIFT ANNOUNCEMENT CAPS YEAR

December 8, 2009, Calgary: EducationMatters celebrated the end of another successful year at its annual Mistletoe Mingle holiday celebration with the announcement of a \$500,000 gift; the 2nd largest in its history. The pledge comes from Heather and Murray Edwards who asked that the trust grant \$100,000 each year over the next 5 years to literacy initiatives for K-12 students. This gift brings the total value of donations and pledges to EducationMatters to \$6,000,000 since 2003. Over the past 6 years, EducationMatters has awarded nearly \$2.4 million in program grants and scholarships. This year alone the trust granted a total of \$446,000 to program enhancements and \$143,000 to scholarships for students entering post secondary study.

“We applaud the Edwards for their vision and passion for public education and helping students. A gift like this provides stability to our granting over the next few years and guarantees support for student literacy,” said Barbara Burggraf, executive director of EducationMatters.

Other guest speakers at the event included: Janessa Green, winner of the EducationMatters Future Leaders Fund Scholarship and Forest Lawn High School alumni, who now majors in biomedical sciences at the University of Calgary; and Pat Cochrane, Chair of the Calgary Board of Education Trustees and an EducationMatters Governor. Also in attendance were Calgary Board of Education Chief Superintendent Naomi Johnson, as well as over 150 donors, Calgary community and business leaders and education professionals.

The evening was hosted by 4th grade student emcee Mustafa Saleh, who was chosen to speak by his principal at Connaught School. The event showcased displays by 2008 grant recipients including Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Calgary, The Calgary Learning Centre, CBE programs RADAR and Teaming Up 4 Healthy Learners, as well as the following schools: Alexander Ferguson, Emily Follensbee, Monterey Park, Capitol Hill, Bowness, Dr. J. K. Mulloy, and Keeler.

Student entertainment was featured by Dr. E. P. Scarlett's jazz ensemble and Lester B. Pearson dancers, who performed hip hop and Caribbean inspired pieces.

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EducationMatters is Calgary's public education Trust, and engages the Calgary community in supporting enhancements programs and student awards for Calgary's public education students. The Trust is the PLUS that gives students more so they can have the best possible learning experiences.

For more information, please contact:

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