

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Community Living Advocates Applaud Government for Investing in the Lives of People with Developmental Disabilities**

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**New Westminster, B.C., February 18, 2009** - The BC Association for Community Living (BCACL) applauds the Government of BC for investing in the lives of people with developmental disabilities. The \$73 million new investment for adults with developmental disabilities announced in yesterday's budget is the first step needed to begin to address the crisis being faced by individuals and families across BC. BCACL recognizes the current economic climate and is pleased that the government understands the social and economic value of working towards its "great goal" of building the best system of supports for persons with disabilities and special needs.

Over the past few months, individuals and organizations from across the province have been speaking out against long waitlists for crucial disability supports and services. As part of the campaign to [End Waitlists Now](#), thousands of people from across BC sent faxes, emails, letters, phone calls, facebook messages, and blog posts, to the Premier demanding that his government pay attention to the thousands of children and youth with special needs and their families and more than 2000 adults with developmental disabilities, who have been languishing on waitlists.

"This government has shown true leadership by listening to the community and responding to the needs of children and youth with special needs, adults with developmental disabilities and their families," says Rory Summers, BCACL President. "The new funding will make a huge impact on the lives of those waiting for services and will be instrumental in alleviating the current crisis."

The government also announced \$38 million of new funding for children and youth with special needs, to be distributed over the next three years. While we are pleased that government has invested in the lives of children with special needs, we are worried that this funding will not fully address the needs of the thousands of children and youth waiting for crucial early intervention and supported childhood development services. We encourage government to continue to increase these investments to reflect the real need of children and families in BC.

In addition, another \$12.9 million will be allocated over the next two years to providing needed supports to vulnerable adults who are deemed ineligible for services because their I.Q. is above 70. We acknowledge that eligibility has been a challenging issue to address within our system and we're pleased to see that government has heard our concerns and has begun to respond to this vulnerable population. We will continue working with government to ensure that all people with developmental disabilities, including those with I.Q.'s over 70, receive the supports they need.