



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Local Parent and Retired Teacher recognized with National Award for Commitment to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs.**

#### ***Barbara Laird awarded the National Inclusive Education Award***

**Vancouver, B.C, February 18, 2009** – Retired teacher and parent Barbara Laird will be given a Champion of inclusive Education Award from the Canadian Association for Community Living and the BC Association for Community Living in recognition of her dedication to an education system that is inclusive of students with special needs. A passionate promoter of inclusive education, Barbara has provided exceptional service, support and advocacy at a local, provincial, national and international level for over 25 years. Her work and advocacy history includes involvement in preschool, elementary, secondary school and post secondary institutions.

Sandra Kirkegaard, a colleague and friend of Ms. Laird has seen firsthand how Ms. Laird's skills have fostered an environment where inclusion of students with developmental disabilities occurs.

***"She is clearly committed to making positive systemic changes within our education institutions and community." says Kirkegaard. "Ms. Laird currently volunteers over 500 hours per year due to her deep enthusiasm and belief in inclusion."***

***A parent, Kim Pemberton, says this about Ms. Laird-"She is a wonderful mentor, exceptional advocate and staunch supporter of inclusive education."***

National Inclusive Education Week provides an opportunity to acknowledge and recognize the commitment and effort of teachers, administrators, students, and families who contribute to successful inclusion of students in schools and classrooms throughout Canada.

Inclusive school practices help provide quality education to an increasingly diverse student population, including students with a developmental disability.

**We know inclusive education works. Children who learn together in school also learn to live well together as adults and are better able to create communities where everyone belongs.**