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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

### **\$1.8 MILLION FOR 18 ACTNOW BC SENIORS COMMUNITY PARKS**

PENTICTON – The Province has provided a total of \$1.8 million to 18 communities throughout British Columbia to establish ActNow BC Seniors Community Parks that will encourage B.C. seniors to live healthy, active lives, Healthy Living and Sport Minister Mary Polak announced today at the Union of BC Municipalities convention.

“These parks are a great way to support older British Columbians in exercising and improving their health,” said Polak. “They also offer a place to connect and socialize, keeping seniors active and engaged in their communities. We know that a significant demographic shift is on the horizon and we’re giving local governments the tools to develop more age-friendly, accessible communities.”

Following through on a commitment from the 2008 throne speech, the ActNow BC Seniors Community Parks are designed to help older adults stay mobile, physically active and healthy in their communities. Inspired by the Lions Wellness Park in Tsawwassen, also supported by government, these parks will provide specialized outdoor recreational equipment and activities designed to improve mobility, co-ordination and balance, as well as opportunities for social interaction – a critical healthy living component for older people.

“As a pharmacist who practised in the field of geriatrics for 25 years, I am truly aware of the tremendous impact that a seniors’ park can have on the health of maturing adults in a community,” said Harry Caine, who championed the Lions Wellness Park in Tsawwassen. “Physical activity is a most important ingredient for maintaining healthy aging, and I am glad to see our province investing in the health and wellness of older adults and seniors through initiatives such as these wellness parks.”

In this first round of parks, the Province is providing 18 local governments with funding of up to \$100,000 for purchase and installation of the physical activity equipment. Local governments will provide land, site preparation, ongoing maintenance and program delivery for each of the park locations. The parks will be installed in each community by spring 2009.

The communities receiving funding were selected based on regional representation and seniors’ population. They include:

Cranbrook	Nelson	Kelowna
Kamloops	Abbotsford	Burnaby
Surrey	Richmond	Vancouver
District of North Vancouver	Sidney	Nanaimo
Courtenay	Terrace	Prince George
Dawson Creek	North Cowichan	Oak Bay

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- 2 -

The ActNow BC Seniors Community Parks are a priority action in the recently launched Seniors in BC: A Healthy Living Framework action plan for seniors – B.C.'s framework to support older British Columbians to live healthy active lives.

To read about other initiatives in the Seniors in BC: A Healthy Living Framework, visit: [www.cd.gov.bc.ca/seniors/PDFs/seniors\\_framework\\_web.pdf](http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/seniors/PDFs/seniors_framework_web.pdf)

-30-

Media        Anne McKinnon  
contact:     Communications Director  
               Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport  
               250 952-2387

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