



## Local Olympian “kicked off” soccer social for Global Youth Service Day

**CALGARY** – Soccer fans of all ages “had a ball” Saturday, as **Mike Brown**, a local swimming superstar and Olympic athlete, kicked off a soccer-social at Hull Child and Family Services in celebration of Global Youth Service Day. The event, which was organized by youth volunteers with Child and Youth Friendly Calgary (CYFC), aimed to help youth gain a further understanding of the importance of living a healthy, active lifestyle.

Global Youth Service Day is the largest annual celebration of Youth Engagement and Volunteerism around the world. CYFC marks the annual celebration by supporting youth to create and lead projects to address issues in their local communities. This year, CYFC youth volunteers took on the theme of *Spring into Action*.

“The purpose of *Spring into Action* is to promote awareness of the importance of health, wellness, and physical activity in young people,” said Kaylee Terriff, Youth Volunteer Corps Coordinator with CYFC, “Also, by getting youth volunteers involved in the planning and implementation of these events, those youth will gain leadership skills, improved self-esteem, and a deeper understanding of the issues that affect their community.”

This year’s theme of health and physical activity created a natural fit for Right To Play to partner with CYFC on the project. Right To Play is an athlete-driven international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play as a tool for development of children and youth. Right To Play programs work around the globe to foster healthy physical, social and emotional development of children and build safer and stronger communities.

Appearing as a Right To Play Athlete Ambassador, Mike Brown was on hand to officiate, hand out prizes and cheer on the festivities. Brown, who has claimed Canadian championships and represented our country at the Athens Olympics, will be making waves at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

**Beckie Scott**, Canada’s Olympic gold-medal cross country skiing champion, is also a Right To Play Athlete Ambassador, and helped coordinate Right To Play’s involvement with the event. “Right To Play is honoured to partner with CYFC for this great day of celebrating youth and sport, and the incredible things that can happen when the two are brought together,” said Scott, “Whether you are a child in Canada, Africa, Asia or the Middle East, sport has the universal ability to engage, teach, empower, strengthen communities and spread peace. We have, through sport and play, an amazing, indispensable tool at hand to help our youth and create a better world for them, and Global Youth Service Day is another great example.”

The event was actually part of a series of soccer events organized for this year’s Global Youth Service Day project. The overall project consisted of two initiatives, which were completely created and coordinated by CYFC’s youth volunteers. The first saw CYFC and Right To Play partner with a number of Calgary schools to set-up inter-school soccer games throughout the day on Friday, April 25. Over 200 students participated in the games across the city.

The second resulted in CYFC and Right To Play hosting five different soccer events in various low-income communities throughout Calgary over the weekend. Each community event was open to local families and included fun games, snacks and gifts for every child in attendance.

“It is a sad but true reality that in this affluent city, there are still hundreds of children whose parents cannot afford to put them in organized sports, said Terriff, “We hope that by holding these events we will build stronger communities and create equal opportunities for all children and youth in Calgary to participate in sports.”

- 30 -

### Media contacts:

Kaylee Terriff  
Youth Volunteer Corps Coordinator, CYFC  
Cell: (403) 589-2869  
Office: (403) 266-5448

Simon Ibell  
Athlete Relations & Communications, Right To Play Canada  
Cell: (403) (416) 910-5960  
Office: (416) 203-0190 ext. 205

### Child & Youth Friendly Calgary (CYFC)

Child and Youth Friendly Calgary is a non-profit organization based on the firm belief that young people who experience being contributing members of society will become adults who have a sense of ownership and a responsibility to their community. Our purpose is to “lead in providing meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to our community.”

### Right To Play

Right To Play is an athlete-driven international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play as a tool for development of children and youth in the most disadvantaged areas of the world. Right To Play is committed to improving the lives of these children and to strengthening their communities by translating the best practices of sport and play into opportunities to promote development, health and peace.