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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Parents and Teens Come Together to Learn and Share *Record Participation at Annual Tuning Into Our Teens***

**Langley, BC** School is usually a quiet place on a weekend, but on Saturday, October 14, 2006 the halls of HD Stafford Secondary School were buzzing with laughter and energy as approximately 200 local teens and their parents met to take part in the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Tuning Into Our Teens conference for girls.

Hosted by Soroptimist International of the Langleys, this one-day conference is designed not only to bring awareness to teenaged girls of the challenges and dangers facing them in the world today, but also to make parents aware of those same issues. An important result is creating dialogue and an increased understanding of one another.

Event committee co-chairs Evelyn Hohmann and Noreen Straker were thrilled with the amazing support for the club's annual Tuning Into Our Teens to Langley. "Each year we are challenged to put together a program that appeals to both teens and parents without becoming repetitive or overlooking important social issues that are facing our teens and their families", said Hohmann. "Soroptimists in our club work together for months in advance to find the best possible presenters to speak to our teens and their parents."

"This event is not a difficult one to sell to presenters and our sponsors," continued Straker. "Tuning Into Our Teens has gained an incredible reputation as a quality event for parents and girls. Each year our members work hard to ensure that word of our event reaches as many girls as possible. In addition to wonderful media support throughout the Lower Mainland, we have made presentations to both Councils, the School Board, the District PAC and have visited each secondary school with information. The support we receive is overwhelming."

During the day's opening ceremonies, dignitaries including Mary Polak, MLA Langley, Mayors Peter Fassbender, City of Langley and Kurt Alberts, Township of Langley and Langley School District Vice-Chair Alison McVeigh welcomed the girls and parents and shared a bit of their experience as parents, stressing that communication and spending time together is very important to families throughout the teen years.

A special presentation was made to 13 year old Langley student Gabrielle Starr who is organizing a fund raising event on October 21 to draw attention to the plight of young African children in Northern Uganda. Soroptimist International of the Langleys was proud to present Gabrielle with \$1000.00 towards her program.

Opening speaker, Olympian Lynn Kanuka, who won a bronze medal in the Los Angeles Olympics, urged the young women present to reach for their dreams. She took the crowd back to her medal-winning race at the Olympics and shared with everyone the work and determination it took her to reach her goal.

Participants were given a choice of a wide range of workshops early in the day and were treated to a performance by Abbotsford's Karen-Lee Batten who is a former Canadian Idol finalist. There were also several displays set up during the day for girls and parents to browse through and gather additional resource information.

To close out the events of the day, keynote speaker Keith Pattinson reminded everyone that we can make a difference in the world we live in, in very simple ways. He challenged everyone to develop positive assets in their lives and use those to improve the lives of someone they come in contact with at home, in their school, neighbourhood or community.

To close the conference, RCMP Superintendent Janice Armstrong, who in February of 2006 became Langley's first female officer in charge, treated those in attendance to a motivating presentation. Superintendent Armstrong complimented everyone attending the conference for caring about themselves and one another. She urged the girls to reach for their goals and dreams as she did when she was approximately their age.

Soroptimist International of the Langleys would like to thank the following sponsors for their support of this year's event: Principal Wendy Johnson, staff and students of HD Stafford Secondary School, BC Gaming Commission, City of Langley, Township of Langley, The Soroptimist Foundation of Canada, The Langley Times, District Parents' Advisory Committee, Dove, Fraser Valley Regional Library, Langley School Board, Langley School District #35, Natasha Jones Photography, Credit Counselling Society, Karat Imports Ltd., Pizzazz International, Purified Water Store, The Salvation Army, Save On Foods – Willoughby & Walnut Grove, and SonRise Church.

In summing up the 2006 Tuning Into Our Teens, Soroptimist International of the Langleys President Lilianne Fuller said: "Soroptimist International's slogan is "Best for Women" and our mandate is to improve the lives of women and girls in our communities locally and around the world. This Conference is a great example of how our group works towards this mandate."

Soroptimist International is a worldwide organization for women in management and the professions working through service projects like Tuning Into Our Teens. The Langley club meets the first Tuesday of each month. For additional information on Soroptimist International of the Langleys, contact Jan (604-530-7840).

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