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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Think first Canada to avoid brain and spinal injury in water sports and recreation

Thursday, May 20, 2010, Toronto, ON – Think *first* Canada when you set out for water based sports and recreation this season. Whether from a diving board, the side of a swimming pool, or a rock at the edge of a lake, diving involves head-first entry into the water and therefore the risk of sudden head impact and broken necks. In fact, in a recent ThinkFirst-Tator study 91 per cent of diving injuries occurred between the months of May and August.

According to the study diving is the most common cause of spinal injury among all the sports and recreational activities in Ontario. “Diving injuries represent 10 per cent of all spinal cord injuries treated at Toronto area hospitals,” reports Dr. Charles Tator, founder of ThinkFirst Canada. “The majority of diving injuries are sustained in private, recreational, and unsupervised settings.”

The ThinkFirst-Tator study reports some disturbing trends with 89 per cent of injuries sustained by males and 77 per cent of all diving injuries sustained by those between the ages of 11-30, making young people, especially boys and men, at particular risk of serious or fatal diving injuries.

It’s not all grim, “the more you know about safe diving techniques the less likely you are to be injured,” says Rebecca Nesdale-Tucker, executive director, ThinkFirst Canada. “That’s why ThinkFirst partnered with the Canadian Red Cross to produce the Sudden Impact and Dive Smart resources.”

ThinkFirst Canada’s top tips for reducing your risk of sustaining a catastrophic injury and Dive Smart can be found at <http://thinkfirst.ca/safetyinfo.aspx>.

ThinkFirst Canada is a national, charitable organization dedicated to preventing brain and spinal cord injury. Founded in 1992 by renowned neurosurgeon, Dr. Charles Tator, ThinkFirst Canada continues to be an injury prevention leader encouraging children and youth and those who care about them to be active and safe. ThinkFirst advocates for proven injury prevention strategies including helmet use. At the heart of ThinkFirst Canada are 19 Chapters that stretch across the country. ThinkFirst's injury prevention message is promoted through TD ThinkFirst for Kids, sport programs, schools, community presentations, concussion education and with the help of VIPs

(Voices for Injury Prevention), a dedicated group of injury survivors who share the message that prevention is the only cure.

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