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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ThinkFirst Canada applauds Intrawest on Helmet Policy

Tuesday October 6, 2009, Toronto, ON - Personal injury in Canada is one of the most serious public health issues facing our country. Preventable injury remains the leading cause of child and youth death and disability in Canada. The annual economic cost of injury in Canada is 19.8 billion dollars. Head injuries are among the most serious of these injuries. **Prevention is the only cure.**

The CIHI report, "Head Injuries in Canada: A Decade of Change (1994/95 – 2003-2004)" indicates that between the years of 2000-2001 to 2003-2004 there was a 46% increase in the number hospitalizations for severe head injuries. The impact of these devastating injuries on families, friends, and communities is incalculable. The good news is that most of the injuries are preventable, and that injury prevention programs are beginning to work.

ThinkFirst Canada is very proud to partner with stakeholders across Canada to reduce the overall rate of injury and make a long-term, significant impact on the of communities across the country, and most importantly, the lives of individual Canadians – Intrawest has been one of those stakeholders with membership on the ThinkFirst ski safety committee that produced "A Little Respect...ThinkFirst", a ski safety DVD.

"Intrawest has shown leadership by voluntarily introducing new helmet requirements and updating its advertising to promote helmet use," said Dr. Charles Tator, ThinkFirst Canada's founder. "I am hopeful that other ski operators will follow Intrawest's lead and ThinkFirst's advice and adopt mandatory helmet requirements as a best practice throughout the industry."

ThinkFirst Canada supports Private Members Bill, C-289 which would amend Part I of Section I of the *Hazardous Products Act* to require that snow sports helmets meet the requirements of the Canadian Standards Association standard CSA-Z263.1.

"Wearing protective helmets can reduce the risk of head injury. Canadians should choose a helmet that meets the new CSA standard," said Dr. Tator, "We also recommend that Canadians visit our website and watch 'A Little Respect...ThinkFirst' before hitting the slopes."

"Intrawest's decision will go a long way to promote recreational helmet use, we also need to be sure that those helmets are safe – and to encourage all Canadians to **thinkfirst.ca before they play**" Tator concluded.

ThinkFirst Canada is a national, Toronto-based 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 by providing kids and those who care about them with lifesaving information. We encourage Canadians to be active and to think first – by getting trained, wearing the gear and using wisdom to navigate risks.

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