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For Immediate Release

SkateboardFest 2008 Brings Helmet Safety Scadding Court Skatepark

Toronto, ON (23 June, 2008) – Summer is the season for outdoor wheeled activities. The warm weather inspires many of us to bring out our bikes, rollerblades, and – for a large and growing number of kids and youth – skateboards. The increase in popularity of skateboarding can be seen in the number of parks that have been built specifically to give boarders a place to learn, practice and perfect their skills. But with those wheels come with an increased risk of injury, especially head injuries. The best way to prevent these traumatic injuries while skateboarding is by wearing a properly fitted, certified helmet. The ThinkFirst Foundation, together with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Western Hospital, are bringing that message to young skateboarders this Wednesday July 23rd, 2008, at Scadding Court Community Centre.

“Skateboarding is an excellent activity for children and youth-to keep them healthy and make them fit,” said ThinkFirst founder and renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Charles Tator, “however, like all activities skateboarding carries some risks, especially the risk of a head injury. ThinkFirst teaches kids to use their brain to protect themselves, and wearing a helmet while skateboarding is one of the proven ways to protect the brain.”

SkateboardFest 2008 will get the help of local high-level skateboarders to introduce campers in the City of Toronto’s day camps to skateboarding skills and drills at Scadding Court Community Centre’s skatepark, while Dr. Tator and the ThinkFirst Foundation will teach the campers how to properly fit and wear a helmet for skateboarding.

Injury statistics have yet to catch up to the explosion in popularity of skateboarding, but according to some recent research, skateboarding injuries account for 41.9% of all hospitalizations due to wheeled recreational activities. Experts agree that wearing a helmet certified for skateboarding and fitted properly to the head can reduce the incidence of brain injuries due to skateboarding. Along with learning new skills, campers will also leave with a new helmet to wear when practicing their skateboarding moves, thanks to the ThinkFirst Foundation and the Ministry of Health Promotion’s summer helmet initiative.

For more information on the work of ThinkFirst and our upcoming activities, please visit our website at www.thinkfirst.ca.

To watch our skateboarding PSA, please visit: <http://www.thinkfirst.ca/download.asp> and click on “Public Service Announcement”.