



## Media Release

Children's Museum Hosts 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Great Friend to Kids Awards

### For Immediate Release

September 28, 2011

**WINNIPEG, MB** - The Children's Museum hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Great Friend to Kids Awards on Wednesday, September 28, 2011 at the newly renovated Children's Museum.

This inspiring event honours individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to enriching the lives of children. Awards like these have been presented to individuals, organizations and youth on behalf of Children's Museums all over North America for years. Additionally, the Association of Children's Museums annually presents their own International Great Friend to Kids Award. Some past recipients of this International Award include UNICEF (2002), First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (1998), and Fred Rogers (1996).

"We hope these awards demonstrate how much we genuinely appreciate the shining stars in our community. By recognizing those who are dedicated to helping children, we hope to inspire others to do the same," says Diane Doth, Executive Director of the Children's Museum.

This year's awards recipients include:

- **Individual Category:** Wanda Koop (Artist and Founder of Art City)
- **Individual Representing a Not-For-Profit Organization Category:** Abdikheir Ahmed for his work with the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
- **Organization Category:** West Broadway Youth Outreach
- **Youth Category:** Carly Welham

(Biographic sketches attached)

The Nominating Committee and hosts for the event includes Susan Auch (Honourary Capital Campaign Co-Chair & Olympic Medalist), Kate Gajdosik (Weather Specialist, Global Television), Joanne Kelly (Broadcasting Instructor, Red River College), Heather McIntyre (Promotion/Production Manager, Global Television), Aileen Najdich (Assistant Deputy Minister, School Programs Division, Manitoba Education), and Peggy Yuill (Senior Marketing Consultant, National Marketing, Investors Group).

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### Media Contact:

[Lisa Dziedzic](#)

Director of Marketing & Communications

Direct Line: 924-4011

## **ABOUT THE GREAT FRIEND TO KIDS AWARD RECIPIENTS:**

### **Individual Category**

#### **Wanda Koop (Artist and Founder of Art City)**

Wanda Koop is a renowned visual artist, and over the course of her career, she has been the recipient of numerous national and international awards in recognition of her achievements. As the founder of Art City, Wanda created the organization with the goal of bringing together contemporary visual artists and inner-city youth to explore the creative process. Located in West Broadway at the heart of Winnipeg's core area, Art City is not just about art, it is about belonging, creating opportunities, developing life skills, and enhancing self-esteem and self-respect within a disadvantaged community.

### **Individual Representing A Not-For-Profit Organization Category**

#### **Abdikheir Ahmed (for his work with the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba)**

Abdikheir Ahmed is a motivating individual who focuses on community issues including settlement, gang and street crime prevention, and employment opportunities. Until recently, he ran the children's and youth programming at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba. While working there, he was heavily involved in talks with the Winnipeg Police Service and other community leaders in an attempt to bridge the gap between our local police and our newcomer community. He also served on a number of immigration organization boards.

### **Organization Category**

#### **West Broadway Youth Outreach**

West Broadway Youth Outreach is an organization with a local focus on providing children from low-income families or single parent homes the opportunity for recreation in a safe atmosphere that satisfies their basic emotional, social, recreational and educational needs. Their programs are designed to provide not only simple fun, but also allow the children to learn and grow in experience, and to offer social outlets and emotional support. West Broadway Youth Outreach ensures that adequate individual attention is provided to each child through school and home visits, special outings, and street work. Because of the link with schools and home, West Broadway Youth Outreach is able to relate to the unique needs of each child in their programming.

### **Youth Category**

#### **Carly Welham**

Originally from Gimli, Manitoba, Carly is an extremely active and philanthropic member of our community. She is involved in the MB4Youth Advisory Council which provides feedback to the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors on issues relating to youth such as healthy living, jobs, education, leadership, citizen engagement and on broader issues such as environment and tourism. As a Council member, she and her peers help to ensure that youth have a say in the decisions that affect youth in Manitoba. Carly was a youth representative of her town's Municipal Council, as well as the youth representative on the board of the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba. Carly founded her local "Trick or Treat" campaign, encouraging youth in Gimli to collect canned goods for food banks.