

Media Release

***Leave Them Laughing* Gala raises \$210,000 for youth mental health**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 8, 2010 - The Oolagen Youth Mental Health *Leave Them Laughing* inaugural gala dinner on November 4, 2010 raised \$210,000 to fund much-needed programming. Gala attendees were treated to a stellar evening of fun and laughs with Oolagen Patrons and celebrity emcees, Colin Mochrie and Debra McGrath.

At the event, **The Honourable James Bartleman**, the former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, was honoured with an award for his work in the area of mental wellness. Mr. Bartleman took to the stage to talk about his commitment to reducing the stigma of mental illness and promoting literacy among First Nations Children.

The crowd was riveted by the story of AJ Gallant, once an at-risk youth whose life was transformed as a result of the help he received from Oolagen. It was a powerful and memorable evening that helped to tell the Oolagen story and build support.

For more than 40 years Oolagen, a youth mental health centre, has pioneered the development of innovative and cost-effective programs that help young people work through devastating issues that impede their success in school and in life. Some of the difficulties young people endure every day include violence in the home, sexual abuse, family pressures or gang violence. A University of Toronto teaching facility, Oolagen provides school-based mental health services, residential treatment, intensive services, out-patient counselling, programs for young mothers at risk and a walk-in clinic.

More About Oolagen (www.oolagen.org)

Oolagen is an accredited youth mental health centre located in downtown Toronto. Common issues that Oolagen helps youth deal with include physical and sexual abuse, school issues, violence, issues of grief and death, family conflict, separation and divorce, alcohol and drug misuse, depression, eating disorders, sexuality and suicidal and self-harming behaviours.

The hopes and aspirations of Oolagen are based on our vision for healthy relationships between youth and their families that recognize and build upon strengths, a community that works in partnership to enhance the social and emotional well being of its citizens, and a comprehensive, flexible service system that effectively responds to the challenging and diverse needs of the people we serve.

Oolagen's overhead costs are uniquely managed to remain below 10%, which means that over 90% of every dollar goes directly toward helping at-risk youth in Toronto.

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