

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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## **Rick Hansen asks Canada to sign-up 7,000 difference makers for 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Relay Launches contest to win Relay spot, announces Relay medal, sponsors and first participant**

**Mississauga, ON** – 25 years after his Man In Motion World Tour, and in preparation for his 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Relay which will re-create the Canadian-portion of his original Tour, Rick Hansen is looking for help to cover the 12,000 kilometre trek across Canada – 7,000 helpers to be exact. One man in motion will be represented and celebrated by many in motion; as 7,000 participants from across Canada who have made their own difference in the lives of others will walk, wheel or run in the Rick Hansen Relay when it begins on August 24, 2011 in Cape Spear, Newfoundland and Labrador and concludes on May 22, 2012 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

To find and recognize these participants, the Rick Hansen Foundation launched today an online public contest at [www.RickHansenRelay.com](http://www.RickHansenRelay.com), inviting Canadians who have made a difference to enter to win a spot to participate in the Relay as a Medal-Bearer. To encapsulate the country's multi-faceted population, contest criteria will be broad and is open to: individuals who are creating a more accessible and inclusive world, leading and encouraging others to live a healthy and active lifestyle, or persons who are contributing to the protection and sustainability of the environment.

With the Relay passing through over 600 communities across Canada, the Rick Hansen Foundation is looking for Canadians from across the nation to enter for their chance to take part in the Relay in their community. The full map and list of communities that the Relay will pass through is also available online. While Rick will not be wheeling across the entire country as he did 25 years ago, he will be present at a number of stops throughout the country during the nine month Relay.

"Canadians across the country are being invited to join me in the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Man In Motion World Tour," said Rick Hansen, President and CEO of the Rick Hansen Foundation. "The Relay will connect a nation of difference makers who are outstanding examples of everyday heroes having an impact on the lives of others through a vision of a healthy and inclusive world. This is the start of a movement for 7,000 Canadians to help inspire the nation and live by the credo that anything is possible."

At an event to launch the online contest for the Relay, Rick Hansen Secondary School in Mississauga hosted Rick in a gymnasium of over 900 students. Also in attendance was the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, who spoke prior to Rick's entrance.

"I am honoured to take part in the launch for Canadians to enter and take part in the Rick Hansen Relay, which marks the milestone anniversary of Rick's Man In Motion World Tour," said the Honourable David C. Onley. "For more than a quarter century Rick has raised significant funding for and awareness of disability and accessibility issues and his 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Relay will inspire a new generation to make a difference in the lives of others, with the hopes of creating an inclusive society for all."

Making the vision of celebrating everyday Canadian's contributions to their communities a reality, the Rick Hansen Foundation also announced the list of Relay and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary sponsors to date. Presenting Partners include McDonald's and Nike, with CTV as Official Broadcaster, and Air Canada, The Globe and Mail, Honda, Pattison Outdoor Advertising, the Royal Canadian Mint, and Scotiabank announcing their support as Official Suppliers.

While the first Medal-Bearer will kick the Relay off in Cape Spear, Newfoundland and Labrador on August 24, 2011, the first participant of the Relay to be named was announced at the event at Rick Hansen Secondary School. Amna Ansari, a 17 year old grade eleven student at the school, originally thought she

was going to demonstrate to her peers how to sign-up for the Relay via the online contest. However, she was surprised to find out that Rick Hansen himself announced she would run in the Relay when it makes its way through Ontario in late 2011. Ansari is an accomplished student who is actively involved in school mentor programs, plays, and student committees. Outside of the classroom she is a nursing co-op student at Credit Valley Hospital and has created programs such as the adoption of Century Park in Ontario, and organized a week to end violence campaign. Amna is a true difference maker for the next generation, and someone whose work is creating positive change for her community.

Continuing the Relay's mission to recognize everyday heroes across the country, Presenting Partner McDonald's Canada invited Dale Bartlett to participate in the Relay as a difference maker. Bartlett is an owner-operator of six McDonald's restaurants in the Greater Toronto Area, and an active contributor to McDonald's Canada's philanthropic endeavours such as Ronald McDonald House Charities. 25 years ago Bartlett was a McDonald's Restaurant manager at the Eaton Centre shopping complex in downtown Toronto. Upon being inspired by Rick's story, he personally organized a fundraising coin-box campaign within the Eaton Centre's retailers, and raised \$30,000 in one month, culminating in presenting a cheque to Rick when he made his way through Toronto in November of 1986.

"Leading a fundraising effort as a manager for our Eaton Centre restaurant during the original Man In Motion Tour and meeting Rick 25 years ago had a profound impact on me," said Bartlett. "Working at McDonald's taught me the importance of giving back to the community and being in contact with Rick showed me the power each individual has to make a difference in the lives of others."

As the Relay will connect the country from coast to coast, the symbol that links each participant to the next will be the Rick Hansen Medal, designed and produced by the Royal Canadian Mint. From the same Ottawa facility responsible for medals of the Canadian Forces, the RCMP and the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games, the Mint has designed and handcrafted sterling silver Rick Hansen Relay Medals. Every Medal-Bearer will receive their own medal to permanently remember the way in which they personally added to the momentum of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Relay.

"The Royal Canadian Mint is proud to join the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Man In Motion World Tour by contributing the talent and ingenuity of its employees to the creation of the Rick Hansen Medal," said James B. Love, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Royal Canadian Mint. "Rick Hansen has inspired millions in the 25 years since his historic journey and the Mint is honoured to have had the unique opportunity to immortalize his legacy by crafting the unforgettable Rick Hansen Medal."

The public contest by which Canadians can enter to win their spot on the Rick Hansen Relay opens today, with regional closing dates. The contest closes on: June 1, 2011 for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Quebec; August 3, 2011 for Ontario; October 26, 2011 for Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan; and December 28, 2011 for British Columbia.

#### **Media Materials:**

The following items will be available on the Media Centre Page of [www.RickHansen.com](http://www.RickHansen.com): Relay route map, full list of communities and dates, difference maker biographies, high resolution images of the Rick Hansen Medal and a Medal Backgrounder, and high resolution images and b-roll video of Rick's original Man In Motion World Tour.

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#### **About the Rick Hansen 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Relay:**

Beginning on August 24, 2011 in Cape Spear, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Rick Hansen 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Relay will retrace the Canadian segment of the original Man In Motion World Tour, traveling 12,000 kilometres, through 600 communities and concluding in Vancouver, British Columbia on May 22, 2012. This time, one will inspire many in motion; engaging 7,000 participants from across Canada who have made their own difference in the lives of others. Please visit [www.RickHansenRelay.com](http://www.RickHansenRelay.com) for more information.

**About the Rick Hansen Foundation:**

The Rick Hansen Foundation is a registered charitable organization that provides leadership to accelerate progress toward a more healthy, sustainable and inclusive world. The Foundation achieves its goals by connecting the people and resources that make innovation possible. Please visit [www.RickHansen.com](http://www.RickHansen.com) for more information.

**About Our Sponsors:**

A project of the scope and scale of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Rick Hansen Relay could not be possible without the tremendous support from our partners. Our sponsor's involvement – be it financial, operational or through the provision of services – is crucial to our goal of celebrating everyday Canadians' contributions to their communities and inspiring the next generation of difference makers.

Presenting Partners: McDonald's, Nike | Official Broadcaster: CTV | Official Suppliers: Air Canada, The Globe and Mail, Honda, Pattison Outdoor Advertising, the Royal Canadian Mint, Scotiabank.

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