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## **PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release

### **OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE *GRAND DÉFI PIERRE LAVOIE***

*All the elements are in place to motivate young people  
to get more active and to eat better.*

**Montréal, February 5, 2009** — Pierre Lavoie has invited his main supporters and media representatives to Studio Mel's to officially launch the first edition of the *Grand défi Pierre Lavoie*, a friendly competition that will take place in May 2009, in elementary schools across the province.

The project has gotten off to a good start with the *Tournée le Lait* that began last November. As of today, the organizers are ready to launch the contest component of the project and to accept online registrations now that the websites: [www.leGDPL.com](http://www.leGDPL.com) and [www.LeveToiETBouge.com](http://www.LeveToiETBouge.com) are up and running, targeting young people in particular.

"The launch of our websites will allow us to reach even more young people, keep their interest in the project and to raise awareness about our cause. I feel that we now have all the necessary elements in place so we can take it down to cruising speed and make the *Grand défi* a surefire success," confirmed Pierre Lavoie.

#### **A promising start**

The *Tournée le Lait* has already visited 25 elementary schools in Quebec since last November. The ultra sophisticated caravan was specially designed to hold 16 stationary bikes set up with computers that simulate an actual bike race. As Pierre Lavoie explains, "Every time I'm delightfully surprised to see how enthusiastic young people get and watch their eyes light up the minute we ask them to get on our bikes. They really want to take part, which is a very good sign for us in terms of the number of registrations for the *Grand défi Pierre Lavoie*."

In fact, the *Tournée le Lait* aims to not only give young people a unique experience in terms of learning about physical activity and good eating habits, but the goal is also to motivate schools to sign up for the *Grand défi Pierre Lavoie*.

#### **The next step: the contest for elementary schools**

The objective of the contest is to reward schools across the province for making a commitment to being more physically active.

- To enter the contest, young people must do at least 15 minutes of physically activity, seven days a week, throughout the entire month of May, which happens to be 'Students Sports and Physical Education Month'.
- Each session earns a point. The more active the kids are, the more points they earn.
- At the end of the month, the winners will be decided based on which school earns the most points overall, in proportion to the number of students. There will be one winning school in each of the 17 administrative regions of Quebec, out of a total of approximately 5,000 students.

Students from winning schools will win an unforgettable two-day trip to Montreal on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of June. Their arrival at the Olympic stadium will be scheduled to coincide with the final 1000 km event, a magic moment that will be captured live by Québec media. What's more, La Ronde will be reserved exclusively for part of the day for the winners to enjoy.

### **Distinguished Guests**

Many distinguished guests, lead sponsors and major supporters of the *Grand défi* attended the press conference, including: Mr. Guy Authier, Vice president of Rio Tinto Alcan, Primary Metal, Quebec South and United States and lead sponsor; Mr. Pierre Boivin, President of the Montreal Canadiens Hockey Club and the Gillet Entertainment Group and special guest sponsor of the *Grand défi*; Minister of Health and Social Services of Québec, Mr. Yves Bolduc; the president of the Québec Federation of Medical Specialists, Dr. Gaétan Barrette; and the Director of Public Health of Québec, Mr. Alain Poirier.

Minister Health and Social Services, Yves Bolduc praised and emphasized the originality of the *Grand défi* organized by Pierre Lavoie. "I would like to pay tribute to his vision, passion, audacity and determination...and let's not forget his greatest asset of all: his powers of persuasion. This event is perfectly in line with the direction the government is heading in terms of promoting healthy living habits," declared Dr. Bolduc.

### **About the *Grand défi Pierre Lavoie***

In 1999, Pierre embarked on the first *Défi Pierre Lavoie* in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean to raise awareness in the region about lactic acidosis, a disease that afflicted two of his children, and to raise money for research. He cycled solo for 650 km in 24 hours on a circuit surrounding the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region.

The event was so successful that they held it again in 2000, 2002 and 2005. On top of raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for research, the *Grand défi Pierre Lavoie* has created a real craze among young people to get active. That's why Pierre Lavoie and his associate, Germain Thibault, decided to take the challenge to the next level and spread the word across Quebec.

The event was renamed the *Grand défi Pierre Lavoie* for the 2009 edition and for the next two editions already planned in the near future. This year's challenge will have the same essential elements that have made this event a success, year after year: a province-wide tour of elementary schools, the contest, and the cycling marathon.

### **Facing the major social issues at stake**

In Quebec in 2007, 15% of young people aged two to 17 years old were considered overweight and 7% obese, according to the *Conseil québécois sur le poids et la santé*. The Center for Disease Prevention and Control in the United States have figures that show the proportion of children between the ages of 6 and 11 years old who are already considered obese has doubled from 1980 to 2006. This trend appears to be evident in Canada as well. A survey of 850 articles, published in *Pediatrics* magazine in June 2005 stated that regular physical activity clearly led to weight loss and improved other factors in overall health. Recent research has shown that losing weight and adopting healthier lifestyle habits has a direct effect in the medium and long term in the prevention of cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes. According to Pierre Lavoie, "Young people have to move a bit more and eat better to become active citizens. They need this *grand défi*."

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