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**INCLUSION
SASKATCHEWAN**
supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities

PRESS RELEASE

Valley View Centre Institution Closes and Residents Take Rightful Place in Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - September 24, 2019

MOOSE JAW, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA - Today, the last two residents of Valley View Centre left that institution and took their rightful place in community. With their departure, the Government of Saskatchewan fulfills its commitment to close Valley View Centre, a commitment made nearly 7 years ago. The Government of Saskatchewan is sending the message that ALL people have a right to live in the community and not be confined to an institution.

Valley View Centre, in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, has housed hundreds of people with intellectual disabilities over the past 50 years. Its closure is applauded by Inclusion Saskatchewan, the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and, People First of Canada (PFC).

“The closure of Valley View Centre is a historic step forward for individuals with intellectual disabilities,” said Gloria Mahussier, President of Inclusion Saskatchewan, “Thanks to our Saskatchewan-made person-centered approach, all of the centre’s former residents are now living healthy, happy, and secure lives in the communities of their choice. I’d like to thank our partners on the transition team for their thoughtfulness, dedication, and passion over the years.”

“Although this has taken a long time, we know it’s important to have safe, person-centered plans for everyone leaving the institution and that takes time” stated Kory Earle, President of PFC. “We do commend the Saskatchewan government for their commitment to this closure, a closure that gives former residents the right to live in and be included in the community.”

“It is important that persons with an intellectual disability reclaim their rightful place in community,” said Joy Bacon, President of the CACL. “Equally important, this closure means that no other citizen of Saskatchewan will ever again face the possibility of being institutionalized in Valley View Centre. The Executive Director of PFC, Shelley Fletcher, stated, “This is a good day for all citizens of Saskatchewan, and we thank the Saskatchewan government for doing the right thing. Former residents can now begin a new chapter of their lives, living as full citizens of their province without the threat of living in an institution hanging over their heads.”

“Today represents a major victory for human rights in our country,” commented Krista Carr, Executive Vice President (CACL). “Saskatchewan, through this announcement, affirms its commitment to ensuring the rights of all its citizens; rights that have too long been denied of the residents of Valley View. As a country, we are moving closer to the reality promised within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – especially Article 19, the right to live in community.”

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The Canadian Association for Community Living is a Canada-wide association of family members and others working to advance the human rights and inclusion of persons of all ages who have an intellectual disability. Founded in 1958 by parents of children with intellectual disabilities who wanted supports and services within the community instead of in institutions, CACL has become one of Canada's ten largest charitable organizations, and has grown into a federation of 10 provincial and three territorial associations comprising of 400 local associations and over 40,000 members. Find out more at www.cacl.ca.

Inclusion Saskatchewan supports over 2,900 individuals experiencing disabilities and families throughout the province, and impacts thousands more through its work on The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disabilities program and Self-Directed Funding. It works on a wide array of initiatives, projects, and priorities that include: employment support, education and transition support, public education, youth programming, self-advocacy and social activities, family network and workshops, and the Valley View Centre transition.

People First of Canada is the national voice of people who have been labelled with an intellectual disability. The vision of People First is to see all citizens living equally in the community. Find out more at www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca