

Ontario Lung Association Urges Smoking Parents to Give Kids a “Free Ride”
*New campaign asks parents to protect their children from the dangers
of second-hand smoke in vehicles*

TORONTO, ON – November 20, 2008 – Are we there yet? With today's launch of the Ontario Lung Association's *Campaign for a Smoke-free Ride* – a program that urges parents not to smoke in their car when children are passengers – the ride will be so much better. Launching on Canada's National Child Day, *Campaign for a Smoke-free Ride* is dedicated to protecting children by providing parents with the positive support they need to give their kids a smoke-free ride.

“We know that for many parents who smoke, it can be hard to resist lighting up in the car, even when their kids are with them,” says George Habib, president, Ontario Lung Association (OLA). “For this reason, we are pleased to be launching a campaign to give those who smoke the support and encouragement they need to give their kids a smoke-free ride; we would like to thank the Government of Ontario for their support in making this important campaign possible.”

“DRIVE” FOR CHANGE

Taking a positive and educational approach, *Campaign for a Smoke-free Ride* aims to connect with smokers across the province through advertising, community events, a toll-free information line (1-888-344-LUNG (5864)), and a dedicated Web site (smokefreeride.ca) where people can go for information, tips and support on how to have a smoke-free ride.

“Children regularly exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer lung damage and breathing problems and have an increased risk of developing severe illnesses, such as asthma,” says Dr. John Granton, Chair, Ontario Thoracic Society. “What's really important for parents to know is that there is no safe way to smoke in a car with children. In-car concentrations of second-hand smoke are up to 27 times greater than in a smoker's home, making smoking in the car highly toxic to young, developing lungs.”

Ron Fellows, one of Canada's most well-known and well-liked race-car drivers, knows this campaign is all about protecting children. “In my line of work I take plenty of risks, but one risk I would never take is smoking in my vehicles with my kids,” said the father of three (aged 11, 14 and 24) who has raised his children in Ontario. “I would like to commend the Ontario Lung Association and others who have worked so hard to make this campaign a reality.”

OLA URGES SMOKING PARENTS TO GIVE KIDS A “FREE RIDE” /2

For Trae Bregg, from Toronto, this campaign speaks directly to parents like herself. “I’m a smoker but I restrict my smoking in front of my kids. I believe not smoking in the car with my children is a manageable – and fundamental – way of not putting them at risk. It’s good to see that this campaign provides parents like me with the support and encouragement we need to ensure we don’t smoke in cars when kids are passengers.”

Provinces across the country have begun to recognize the importance of this issue. On January 21, 2009, also known as Weedless Wednesday, Ontario will become the third province in Canada to enact legislation that will ban smoking in vehicles with children. Nova Scotia and British Columbia have already enacted similar legislation.

For more information about *Campaign for a Smoke-free Ride*, or the dangers of second-hand smoke in the car, call 1-888-344-LUNG (5864) or visit www.smokefreeride.ca.

ABOUT THE ONTARIO LUNG ASSOCIATION

The Lung Association is one of Canada’s oldest voluntary, not-for-profit health-promotion organizations. The Lung Association is concerned with the prevention and control of asthma, chronic lung disease caused by smoking and with air quality and its effect on lung health. The Ontario Lung Association was incorporated in 1945, and has community offices across the province. Visit the Ontario Lung Association online at www.on.lung.ca or call 1-888-344-LUNG (5864).

The Ontario Lung Association’s *Campaign for a Smoke-free Ride* is supported through funding from the Government of Ontario.

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B-roll will be available via satellite on Thursday November 20, 2008 at:

10:00 - 10:15 and again at 14:00 - 14:15 Eastern

SATELLITE FEED COORDINATES:

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