



## News Release

March 10, 2010

### Hockey Alberta Launches the Respect in Sport Parent Program

#### *For Immediate Release*

**Edmonton, Alta.** – Hockey Alberta, in partnership with Respect Group Inc., is now offering access to a new innovative, interactive, online parenting resource called the Respect in Sport Parent Program.

"As sport administrators, when it comes to dealing with conflict, we spend 90% of our time on 10% of the people," said Hockey Alberta President, Annie Orton. "We feel the implementation of the Respect in Sport Parent Program is a proactive approach to educate parents on how to react to different situations and teach them how to make the hockey rink a more enjoyable place."

Respect in Sport for Parents is an in-depth one hour program providing information on parents' natural influence over a child, the coach or leaders' role in an activity, the role parents play in their child's enjoyment of a sport or activity, and protecting your child when they are outside of your immediate control. The program also provides parents with tools to evaluate their own behaviour by highlighting 5 key 'behavioural traps' frequently exhibited by parents, particularly in competitive sports.

"To this point, there hasn't been a program designed specifically for parents, especially one that is easily delivered over the internet and can drive accountability on behalf of the sport organization," said Respect Group Inc. Co-Founder, Wayne McNeil. "The responsibility for becoming educated now lies with each parent, not the coach, organization or a poster or brochure."

McNeil co-founded Respect Group Inc. in 2004 with former NHL'er Sheldon Kennedy. Kennedy knows all too well the importance of communication and education in sport after his experience of sexual abuse by his junior hockey coach, Graham James.

"This issue hits home for a lot of people. We had to eliminate that fear and be very inviting to make people want to learn," said Kennedy.

"With approximately 57,000 minor hockey players registered in Alberta, this program has the ability to effectively reach and impact over 100,000 sport parents," said Hockey Alberta's General Manager, Rob Litwinski.

This multi-media program utilizes audio with synchronized visuals and animations that demonstrate negative behaviours and provide ideas of how a situation may be better handled. It includes valuable information from subject matter experts delivered in a clear and concise fashion. The program asks questions to parents based on the animated scenarios displayed.

"The program is an effective tool for parents to improve their own experience and the experience of their children in the game. It also is an efficient method for us to continue to communicate the importance of providing a safe and fun sporting environment to all our members. We look forward to offering this innovative service to hockey parents in Alberta," added Litwinski.

"Technology is the only way to reach the masses in a consistent, convenient, simple and manageable way. There are no travel costs, no workshops, no interpretation of the message by an instructor and certification is automatically data based," added McNeil.

"E-learning has made it possible to educate all parents regardless of where they live, what time of day they are available and what official language (French or English) they speak."

The program cost is \$12.00+GST per family and is available immediately through the Hockey Alberta website.

**About Hockey Alberta**

Hockey Alberta is the governing body for all amateur hockey in the province ranging from minor to senior hockey including the Alberta Junior Hockey League. Hockey Alberta has approximately 450 member organizations representing over 85,000 participants in our province. All players are coached, officiated and developed through the teachings and education that Hockey Alberta provides.

**About Respect in Sport**

Respect in Sport is Canada's only on-line bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect prevention program for parents, coaches and community leaders. Founded in 2004 by partners Wayne McNeil and former NHL hockey player Sheldon Kennedy, Respect in Sport has been developed in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross to protect youth, inform leaders, and mitigate an organization's liability.

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For more information please visit [www.hockeyalberta.ca](http://www.hockeyalberta.ca) or contact:

**Mike Dennis**

Coordinator, Communications

Hockey Alberta

Phone: (403)342-6777 Ex. 125

Cell: (403)872-9095

[mdennis@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:mdennis@hockeyalberta.ca)

**Brad Robbins**

Senior Manager, Operations

Hockey Alberta

Phone: (403) 342-6777

[brobbins@hockeyalberta.ca](mailto:brobbins@hockeyalberta.ca)