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NEWS RELEASE

IN THE CARING HANDS OF YOUR NEIGHBOUR VON EXPANDS *NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS* PROGRAM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 10, 2008 (Ottawa, ON) – VON Canada (Victorian Order of Nurses) is pleased to announce it has received \$200,000 from Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) to help expand its successful *Neighbours Helping Neighbours* Program, started by VON Hastings, Northumberland, Prince Edward.

“This project brings together two of VON’s major priorities – volunteerism and caregiving,” says Dr. Judith Shamian, President and CEO of VON Canada. “The *Neighbours Helping Neighbours* Program allows neighbours to support others in need in a way that builds on existing relationships within the community and increases the community’s ability to respond to the unmet needs of family caregivers.”

The program also provides an education component to develop awareness, skills and knowledge needed to offer support and care. The goal of the education is to build understanding around caregiver needs and provide outreach to family caregivers.

Including the already established program in VON Hastings, Northumberland, Prince Edward, the program will be developed in VON sites in Calgary, Corner Brook, Hamilton and Saint John.

For participants who see a neighbour in need, the program enables them to develop their own skills, in turn building their confidence to support and give back to their community. For family caregivers, the program recognizes their need for support and can mean increased social support and reduced stress. And for the person receiving care, the program helps to decrease feelings of social isolation that come from living with challenging health conditions.

“This program has potential to impact our overall health care system,” says Dr. Shamian. “With caregivers and care receivers supported within their own home and communities, there is a reduced reliance on the health care system for respite and decreased admission to long term care. It’s a win for all involved.”

VON is dedicated to being a leader in the delivery of innovative comprehensive health and social services and to influencing the development of health and social policy in Canada. We are a national health organization and registered charity offering a wide range of community health care solutions that meet the needs of Canadians from coast to coast. VON is committed to continuous quality improvement and is accredited by Accreditation Canada.

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