

June 14, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **One-of-a-Kind YMCA to Rise Up on Hamilton Mountain**

HAMILTON - It will be a YMCA like no other in Canada. The new Les Chater Family YMCA will officially begin to rise up on Hamilton Mountain today with a ground breaking and celebration event to mark the special occasion.

The new multi-centre complex is being built in Turner Park on Rymal Road, just east of Upper Wellington. It will offer Y programs and services, health care services in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences, and a licensed child care centre. It will also include a new branch of the Hamilton Public Library, along with the existing police station on the site, city-run sports fields and a children's playground, and a soon-to-be-built skateboard park.

"No other YMCA in Canada has developed a facility with so many partners working together for the good of a community," says Jim Commerford, president and CEO of the Hamilton/Burlington YMCA.

"Together with our partners, we will be promoting a healthy and fun community in this part of the city," adds Brenda Flaherty, chair of the Board of Directors for the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington. "This is an exciting new chapter in the history of our organization, and especially exciting for the residents of Hamilton Mountain."

The Les Chater Family YMCA honours Les Chater, who passed away last month at the age of 97. A YMCA member since he was 10 years old, Mr. Chater was a retired engineer at Stelco and the benefactor of a \$1-million donation to support the building of the Mountain YMCA.

The \$18-million facility has been the focus of a fundraising campaign, with large and small gifts made from across the city and beyond, including a \$2-million gift from the Ontario government and \$500,000 from the Chedoke Health Corporation. Today's ground-breaking event also marks the start of a community campaign on Hamilton Mountain to raise the remaining \$600,000 needed to fund the project.

The Les Chater YMCA is slated to open in 2009.

"The YMCA has operated a branch on Hamilton Mountain from 1959 until 1982 and we are pleased to return to this community," Ms. Flaherty says.

The Hamilton/Burlington YMCA has been a part of the City of Hamilton for 150 years and currently operates branches in downtown Hamilton, Burlington and Flamborough.

-30-

For more information about the Les Chater Family YMCA, please contact Lisa Roddie, General Manager, at 905-529-7102 x. 5003 or email: [leschater\\_info@ymca.ca](mailto:leschater_info@ymca.ca).

**BACKGROUND**  
**About the Les Chater Family YMCA on Hamilton Mountain**

- The Les Chater Family YMCA is being built as a multi-centre complex with a new building to house YMCA programs and services, a day care centre, health care services provided in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences, and a public library branch. The complex will be located in the City of Hamilton's Turner Park and will also include a police station - already on the site - city-run sports fields and children's playground, and a skateboard park to be built by the municipality.
- The complex will help meet the health, social and recreational needs of the Mountain Community.
- The YMCA itself will include a licensed child care centre (for 34 preschool children), a pool and aquatics centre, meeting facilities, gymnasium, conditioning centre and five change rooms – including a family change room.
- Rehabilitation programs will be offered in YMCA facilities, in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences.
- The Les Chater Family YMCA will occupy 53,000 square feet of space, including a common foyer. The adjoining Hamilton Public Library branch will occupy 25,000 square feet.
- The YMCA facility will serve approximately 9,000 people annually.
- The \$18-million cost of the facility has primarily been raised through generous donations from the Government of Ontario, Les Chater, Chedoke Health Corporation and others.
- A portion of the funding was raised through the 1999 “Building Healthy Tomorrows” campaign – targeted to the Flamborough, Burlington, Downtown Hamilton and Hamilton Mountain YMCA branches.
- In addition to an official ground breaking for construction, today marks the start of a \$600,000 community fundraising campaign on Hamilton Mountain to reach the total \$18-million goal.
- Les Chater, for whom the Mountain YMCA will be named, was a member of the YMCA for 87 years.
- He credited his YMCA fitness and leadership training for helping him to survive living in a Japanese prisoner of war camp during World War II.
- The previous Hamilton Mountain YMCA operated from 1959 until 1982 on Upper Wellington Street.

