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News Release

Young man tells gripping tale of child pornography

Calgary, AB – Oct. 15, 2008 – When he should have been thinking about band practice, midterms and school dances, Justin Berry at age 13 was instead becoming immersed in the world of child pornography. What seemed like a harmless way to earn a few bucks – removing his shirt in front of his web cam - became the beginning of a five year nightmare for Berry.

On Oct. 23, 2008, Justin Berry will be sharing his story at Calgary Counselling Centre's third annual Calgary's Bravest Men event at the Calgary Petroleum Club.

Berry will share his own perspective as a male victim of abuse and his struggle to speak up and fight for justice. Justin will share the story of how after five years, he was able to turn away from his secret life; becoming a federal witness against the adults who abused him, and dedicate his life to educating children and their parents about online predators. Justin will encourage Calgarians to stand up and lend their voices to the dialogue on domestic abuse and its destructive impact on our community.

A youth forum has been added to the annual gala event, where Justin will speak to thousands of junior high school students, urging them to be careful about how they spend their time online. The youth forum, sponsored by Education Matters, a private funder and Shaw TV, will take place at the Telus Convention Centre on Oct. 24, 2008.

"Justin's story is every parent's nightmare," says Robbie Babins-Wagner, CEO Calgary Counselling Centre. "Sexual abuse like what Justin experienced is one form of domestic abuse. Abuse does not discriminate against race or gender, or confine itself to one community. Only when we realize that everyone is affected by abuse, can we begin to take steps towards proactive change."

"Calgary's Bravest Men is a catalyst event, aimed at providing community leadership, public education and a social dividend in the form of dialogue and awareness. The event encourages male community leaders to join the many women who stand at the front lines against domestic abuse."

The Wilson Centre for Domestic Abuse Studies at Calgary Counselling Centre has been at the forefront of domestic abuse counselling and advocacy in the community for a quarter century. With a focus on proactive programs that seek to end the cycle of abuse before it begins, we have seen dramatic progress in awareness and treatment of both victims and offenders. Over that time, there has been an increase in awareness of domestic abuse as a prevailing issue within the community, and growth in available counselling services for parties affected by domestic abuse. Proceeds from the Oct. 23 event ticket sales will support the Wilson Centre for Domestic Abuse Studies at Calgary Counselling Centre.

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For more information or interviews with Justin Berry, please contact:

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Calgary Counselling Centre is a registered charitable organization, and the leading research and knowledge-based counselling facility in Canada. Since 1962, the Centre has been committed to providing compassionate, professional and affordable counselling services that help build better lives for Calgarians through positive outcomes. Offering service in over 15 languages, the Centre is also a recognized leader in the treatment of family violence, depression, self esteem and eating disorders. Through its ongoing research and education programs, Calgary Counselling Centre strives to meet the changing needs of our community. The Centre's fee structure is based on income - no one is turned away for an inability to pay.

