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FOR RELEASE #10-021 February 9, 2010

Drop the Pop issues challenge to all Yukon schools

WHITEHORSE – The 2010 Drop the Pop Challenge is calling on all Yukon schools to get creative in addressing healthy drinking and eating.

"This year's campaign has been expanded," Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart said today. "Instead of just encouraging kids to drop the pop, it's asking them to stop and think about what they are drinking and eating, and to consider some healthier choices."

This year the campaign is moving beyond the elementary schools into Yukon's high schools. The campaign's organizer, the Health Promotion Unit, is asking schools to plan and design their own projects to encourage students to think about healthier choices and alternatives to pop.

"In changing this year's program, we are encouraging students, teachers and parents to think about their eating and drinking habits. We wanted to give them the opportunity to gain health knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for successful learning and living," said Lorna Arsenault, the community dietitian with Health and Social Services.

"Already 25 schools have come forward with exciting proposals," Hart said. "Making healthy eating and drinking choices now will lay the groundwork for a bright and healthy future."

Funding is available to each school that undertakes a project. Awards range from \$750 for schools with fewer than 100 students to \$1,250 for student populations of more than 200.

Funds can be used for providing healthy drink or food options for students, for materials encouraging healthy eating and drinking behaviour, or special events related to healthy eating.

Participating schools will also be eligible for a Drop the Pop school award. One school in each population category will be selected for an award that recognizes collaborative and innovative efforts that promote healthy eating and healthy drink choices for students.

For more information visit www.yukondropthepop.ca.

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