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Youth links struggles against HIV/AIDS in Ukraine and Canada for World AIDS Day

Victoria – On the 20th anniversary of World Aids Day on December 1, local non-profit AIDS Vancouver Island and Canada World Youth volunteers will be bringing the symbol of the red ribbon to Victorians, reminding the community that the struggle against HIV/AIDS continues.

To raise awareness on World AIDS Day, Canada World Youth volunteers who have been working with AIDS Vancouver Island will head downtown on Monday, December 1, from 11:30am to 1:30pm, to hand out red ribbon shaped balloons along with information about HIV.

On the same day, on the other side of the globe in the Ukraine, the home country of some of the Canada World Youth volunteers, the balloon giving will be mirrored, bringing attention to the global struggle against HIV/AIDS.

“One in 100 people in the Ukraine is infected with HIV, many of whom are youth,” said Exner. “This action of global awareness illustrates that youth leadership is essential in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.”

In addition, in the early evening, AIDS Vancouver Island and Canada World Youth volunteers will set up a candle display on the front steps of the BC Parliament Buildings. Between 4:30 and 6:30pm, Victorians will be able to witness a red ribbon in candles, displayed to commemorate World AIDS Day and remember those who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS.

AIDS has killed more than 25 million people globally, with an estimated 38.6 million people living with HIV, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. In 2007, there were 57 new diagnosis of HIV on Vancouver Island.

AIDS Vancouver Island has provided community health services focused on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis since 1985. For more information about AIDS Vancouver Island, please visit www.avi.org or call 1-800-665-2437.

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Photo opportunity: Reporters and photographers are invited to meet up with the Canada World Youth volunteers and their balloon brigade at 11:30pm, December 1, at AIDS Vancouver Island, 1601 Blanshard Street.

For more information, contact Heidi Exner at AIDS Vancouver Island at 250-384-2366 ext 107.