

March 22, 2006  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Angela's Annual Spring Stroll

(Guelph, Ontario) The sixth Angela's Spring Stroll, an annual event in support of the prevention and awareness of eating disorders, will be held on Sunday, May 7, 2006, commencing at 11 a.m. at the University of Guelph Arboretum. The proceeds of the walk will go to the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Eating Disorders Coalition.

Angela Marchione, a former model and actress, is the organizer and founder of the event. She has seen how the movie, fashion and print industries can create the backdrop for the establishment of eating disorders and decided to promote positive body image and healthy eating habits through a walk back in 2001. "These days you can't walk past a news-stand without seeing photos of extremely thin actresses and models. The pressure to be thin is not just on the famous, but the Canadian public," says Angela.

It is estimated that over 70,000 individuals in Ontario suffer from eating disorders. April Gates, chair of the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Eating Disorders Coalition and co-ordinator of the Eating Disorders Program at Homewood Health Centre, said that the occurrence of eating disorders seems to be getting worse. "We are seeing increasing numbers of males seeking treatment as well," adds Gates.

Two of the most commonly treated eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. In addition, binge eating has recently been recognized as an eating disorder. Anorexia Nervosa is characterized by drastic weight loss (15 per cent of body weight or more) from dieting which can lead to emaciation and compromised physical and psychological health. Bulimia Nervosa consists of constant changes in weight with episodes of binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting or purging with laxatives, diuretics, compulsive exercising, and periods of fasting. Some people may present with symptoms of both disorders. Binge eating is characterized by out-of-control eating without compensatory behaviours (e.g. purging, compulsive exercise, etc.) and is often followed with feelings of guilt and sadness.

In the December 2005 issue of *Newsweek* the reported onset age of eating disorders in the US has dropped from the age of 12 to the age of nine. By the age of 18, 80 per cent of young women in Canada have dieted, and up to 15 per cent of those have symptoms of eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia.

"Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes," notes Marchione, "The public's acceptance of 'natural sizes' is much needed if we are to foster positive body image and to develop a realistic body-size standard for people, that is what we hope to achieve with this event."

Renee, a former Homewood patient, has participated in Spring Stroll for the past three years. Last year she raised \$350 and won a \$50 gift certificate from William's Coffee Pub. "I come out to this event because the money benefits a great organization. The Coalition is a very valuable resource and a source of support to all those affected by Eating Disorders in the community. In addition, the prizes are great," says Renee.

Participation in Angela's Spring Stroll is free for those who present a pledge form at registration, otherwise it is \$5 per person. Registration and pledge forms are available at the Italian Canadian Club, Homewood Health Centre (main switchboard) and the Guelph Public Libraries. Participants have a chance to win great prizes such as spa packages, weekend getaways and a variety of gift certificates. Vickie van Dyke, Canadian jazz singer, will be performing at the event. Lunch will be provided. All proceeds will go to the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Eating Disorders Coalition.

The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Eating Disorders Coalition, formed in 2000, includes members from a number of community agencies who have a common interest in raising public awareness of eating disorders. The group organizes public events and fundraisers relating to eating disorders prevention and treatment. Money raised by Angela's Spring Stroll over the past five years has been directed toward the Guelph Public Library, where a video library on eating disorders and body image was set-up. Money has also been used to deliver both professional and public educational events during February's Eating Disorders Awareness Week. Funds from this year's event will be used to fund a community support group and establish an eating disorders resource Centre for the Guelph community.

For more information, contact:  
Angela Marchione, Event Organizer  
Telephone: (519) 831-4377  
Or April Gates, Chair WDG Eating Disorder Coalition  
Telephone: (519) 824-1010 ext. 2292