

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
RAISES AWARENESS***

September 6, 2006

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK: Bears for Bereaved Mommies (www.bearsforbereavedmommies.org) is a non-profit, support and awareness organization founded by Saint John resident Terra-Lynn Coggan. Bears for Bereaved Mommies provides support to families who have experienced the loss of a child during pregnancy or shortly after birth. This organization has focused their efforts on increasing public awareness of the profound loss and immense grief experienced by families when they suddenly find themselves being told that their child has died during pregnancy, shortly after birth, or when the newborn they have cared for suddenly dies.

Coggan in conjunction with the assistance of Saint John-Champlain MLA Roly MacIntyre pursued the New Brunswick Provincial Government's Department of Health and Wellness to consider offering their formal recognition of October 15th as a day of remembrance for these lost little ones. On October 12th 2005 that persistence paid off; Coggan's request was formally recognized by New Brunswick Minister of Health and Wellness, Elvy Robichaud, in a statement declaring "October 15th to be Pregnancy and infant Loss Remembrance Day" in the province. The Minister went on in the Declaration to ask all New Brunswickers to join him in "Promoting support, education, and awareness for grieving parents who have loss infants during pregnancy or shortly after birth."

Over the past three years Bears for Bereaved mommies has taken opportunity to raise awareness throughout the month of October; hosting Remembrance Ceremonies and Candle Lightings in conjunction with the International Wave of Light, as well as, hosting their first Walk to Remember; which took place in Fredericton last year. This year along with the physical events that are being hosted on October 15th in Saint John, Bears for Bereaved Mommies is partnering with the Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Death (Canadian SIDS Foundation) to host a Virtual Walk which will assist both organizations in their fundraising efforts.

Coggan is optimistic about the future of her organization, stating "I envision a bright future for Bears for Bereaved Mommies; it is my hope that through partnerships with individuals, organizations, and the business community Bears for Bereaved Mommies will flourish, allowing us to continue to provide programs, services, support, and raise awareness in conjunction with local hospitals, and social agencies.

She hopes to grow this organization substantially, with a wish list that includes enlisting new volunteers, establishing a board of Directors, gaining a non-profit status, and acquiring support from the public and business community in their fundraising efforts. Currently, the group has been raising funds from sales of Awareness Bands and

Remembrance Ribbons. Coggan says the organization's fundraising mission is "to assist local hospitals in developing programs and services for those who experience pregnancy and infant loss and for the purchase of equipment to aid fetal care units in providing optimal prenatal and fetal care to expectant mothers and their babies" in conjunction with efforts promoted by local hospitals.

Bears for Bereaved Mommies was established by Coggan in 2004 after her family experienced a still birth. In her grief process, she realized there was a need for community support for those who grieve these early losses, recognizing that "there are grief support groups for people who have lost someone they've known" but added that her group specifically wants to assist people, parents and close relatives alike, "who are grieving someone they did not have the opportunity to know, or know well, because they died too soon." Typically, people in this situation, she notes, are encouraged by society to "move on" with their lives. She'd like to see that societal view shift to one of recognition and support instead. The group is not affiliated with any religious denomination, seeking only to recognize the grief experienced by those who wished for successful outcomes.

The group has been in operation for 3 years and now offers a multitude of programs and services, including website information and links, an online support group and resource library, direct telephone and email support, and community referral services, but began with the Bear Care Distribution Program, in which bears are distributed to individuals who go home from hospital sad and empty handed.

For more information, or to inquire about available volunteer positions, please contact Terra-Lynn Coggan (506) 696-5521 or visit website: www.bearsforbereavedmommies.org

Copy of New Brunswick Provincial Government Declaration, received October 12, 2005

**Declaration by Hon. Elvy Robichaud,
Minister, Health and Wellness**

New Brunswick
Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

Whereas, the government of New Brunswick recognizes that New Brunswickers who suffer from Pregnancy and Infant Loss need emotional support from family or friends; and

Whereas, New Brunswickers need to be informed and educated about Pregnancy and Infant Loss in order to respond with compassion to affected families; and

Whereas, health care providers and other professionals who come in contact with families who have suffered Pregnancy or Infant Loss can better serve New Brunswick families if they have special training and better knowledge of Pregnancy and Infant Loss;

Now, therefore, be it known that, I, Elvy Robichaud, Minister of Health and Wellness, do hereby declare October 15 as being

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day.

I ask all New Brunswickers to join me in promoting support, education and awareness for grieving parents who have lost infants during pregnancy or shortly after birth.

Hon. Elvy Robichaud,
Minister,
Health and Wellness