

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS GROUP GETS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT NOD

October 12, 2005

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK: Bears for Bereaved Mommies (www.bearsforbereavedmommies.org) is a support and awareness organization for families who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant loss. This organization has been focusing their recent efforts on increasing public awareness about the profound loss and immense grief experienced by families when they suddenly find themselves being told they've miscarried, that their child has died at birth, or when the newborn they've been caring for suddenly dies. The group has been pursuing 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, in order to coincide with October being Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Awareness Month. Today, that persistence has paid off. The group's request was formally recognized today by the New Brunswick Minister of Health and Wellness, Elvy Robichaud, in a statement declaring "October 15 as being *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 lost infants during pregnancy or shortly after birth."

Bears for Bereaved Mommies President and Founder, Terra Lynn Coggan, a Saint John resident, is "very pleased" to have received notice of this declaration today, which comes at a time when the group is set to kick off their 2nd annual salute to PAIL Awareness Month. Coggan says the group is hosting a Walk to Remember and Candle Lighting Vigil on October 15th on the steps of the New Brunswick Legislature in Fredericton, beginning at 3:30 PM, with participants walking together across the Walking Bridge and returning to the Legislature around 4:30 PM. A Candlelit Vigil is planned for 6:00 PM and is slated to coincide with a Wave of Light Ceremony occurring across North America.

Coggan hopes to grow this organization substantially, with a wish list that includes enlisting new volunteers, 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 aid in the development of programs and services for those who experience pregnancy and infant loss, and to assist with the purchase of equipment for the Perinatal and Fetal Assessment Unit" in conjunction with efforts promoted by the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation and Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital Foundation.

Bears for Bereaved Mommies was established by Coggan in 2004 after her family experienced a stillbirth. 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 didn’t get a chance to know, or know well, because they died too soon.” Typically, people in this situation, she notes, are encouraged by society to just “get 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 two years and now offers many 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