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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HONORING THE ORGANIZATIONS IN OTTAWA WHO HAVE INCREASED THE ACCESSIBILITY OF ITS SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH HEARING LOSS

OTTAWA, ONTARIO – The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (National Capital Region Branch) (“CHHA-NCR”) will be presenting their first awards to the National Capital Commission, National Arts Centre and City of Ottawa to commend their efforts to make Ottawa more accessible for the hard of hearing at its Annual General Meeting on October 15, 2008.

More than three million people in Canada experience hearing loss and up until recently many of those individuals with hearing impairments were not able to enjoy many of the cultural events that people in the City of Ottawa take for granted such as concerts, theatre and museums because they were not fully accessible to the hard of hearing. Through their own initiative and the assistance of CHHA-NCR, the National Capital Commission, National Arts Centre and City of Ottawa have implemented policies and improved facilities to increase their accessibility to the hard of hearing community.

In 2007, the National Capital Commission purchased an FM-system which is an assistive listening device for hard of hearing persons to use in NCC-sponsored public meetings and community events. For example, the system was available during the 2008 Orchestras in the Parks events. The NCC also upgraded the Capital Information Centre on Wellington Street which now provided visitors a TTY phone and captioned videos and films.

Recently, the National Arts Centre received a new assistive listening system through a generous donation by Harvey Glatt, an NAC patron. The new system was installed in all three of NAC’s theatres as opposed to only one theatre in the past making all of its presentations accessible to the hard of hearing.

The City of Ottawa has also undertaken a number of initiatives in 2007 and 2008 to increase accessibility to its citizens. For example, it purchased an Assistive Listening Device system for the use by persons who are hard of hearing in city sponsored meetings and events. It also purchased a TTY phone service for the deaf and hard of hearing who cannot use the regular telephone to call City Hall to make inquiries.

The goal at CHHA-NCR is to raise awareness of the hard of hearing community and educate individuals about hearing loss in Ottawa.

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To learn more about this issue, you can contact Frank McNally, member of the Board of Directors of CHHA-NCR at 613-238-1424 x 35.