



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## BC LIGHTS UP GREEN TO RECOGNIZE WORLD CEREBRAL PALSY DAY Wednesday, October 5, 2016

The BC Legislature, Science World, Fitzsimmons Creek Bridge in Whistler and over a dozen other landmarks across British Columbia are lighting up green on October 5 in recognition of World Cerebral Palsy Day. Sixteen cities from Fort St John to Oak Bay, as well as the Government of BC, have proclaimed World Cerebral Palsy Day.

World CP Day encourages people living with or people who know someone living with CP to add their story to [a global map](#). Thirteen people across BC have already added their names to the map, while others are speaking up in their communities.

In Fort St John, seven-year-old Wyatt De Groot and his mother Melissa [asked for a proclamation](#) at a city council meeting. Wyatt, who lives with CP, told the council, “My leg has been weaker than the other one so I have to put a brace on it to make it feel stronger.”

After the meeting Melissa said, “Wyatt was so proud of himself and I was proud of him too.”

Meanwhile, Crystal Gustafson, from the Kamloops Infant Development Society, stepped up on a day’s notice and [asked her council to proclaim the day](#).



*Melissa and Wyatt De Groot address Fort St John city council on September 12, 2016. © Fort St John*

Dan Chalcraft wrote to his city council to ask them to recognize World CP Day. Dan also lives with CP and works as the Community Engagement Assistant for the Cerebral Palsy Association of BC (CPABC). White Rock council agreed and will be lighting the city hall green in recognition of the day.

Dan said, “World Cerebral Palsy Day was a great reason to reach out to the city council where I live. Many people don’t know what CP is or what it’s like to live with CP, so this is an opportunity to raise awareness.”

“The goal of World Cerebral Palsy Day is to raise awareness of what it means to live with CP,” said Feri Dehdar, Executive Director of the CPABC. “We are proud to see so much of the province go green for CP this year.”

On World CP Day, the CPABC will be sharing these stories through social media and encouraging supporters to post selfies of themselves with green landmarks and the hashtag #WorldCPDay.



## World Cerebral Palsy Day

World Cerebral Palsy Day is a movement of people with cerebral palsy (CP) and their families, and the organisations that support them, in more than 50 countries.

Its vision is to ensure that children and adults with CP have the same rights, access and opportunities as anyone else in our society.

Robyn Cummins World CP Day Manager explains: “Cerebral palsy is the most common physical disability in childhood and is also one of the least understood. There are over 17 million people living with CP and 350 million family members, friends and supporters who care about them.”

“But in many countries, people with CP are ‘invisible’. They live out of sight, out of mind and out of options.”

“We talk to people with CP, their families and organisations around the world and find incredibly frustrating similarities. The same issues keep coming up again and again.”

“But the good news is we also hear about the success stories – individuals and organisations who are creating positive change in their communities and are willing to share their experiences, tools and tips. Our mission is to highlight the issues, unearth the success stories and encourage people to take action in their communities.”

Learn more at [www.worldcpday.org](http://www.worldcpday.org)

## Public awareness of cerebral palsy

CP is a complex, lifelong disability. It primarily affects movement, but people with CP may also have visual, learning, hearing, speech, epilepsy and intellectual impairments. It can be mild – a weakness in one hand – to severe – where people have little control over movements or speech and may need 24-hour assistance.

“People with CP across the world tell us that they face a range of responses in their communities,” explained World CP Day Manager, Robyn Cummins.

“A young woman with CP recently told me: ‘People either underestimate us, or overestimate us’. It may be through well-meaning but misguided sympathy or pity, which serves to undermine a person’s autonomy and independence. Or, it can be people who want to make a ‘hero’ out of someone who just wants to lead an ordinary life.”

In many countries, people with CP face superstition and they and their families live a life of exclusion. Other countries seem inclusive on the surface, but have a population who are not quite sure what to say to someone living with CP, so don’t engage at all.

There is nothing to be gained in blaming people for their ignorance about CP. Instead, World CP Day is working to put an end to it. Around the world individuals and organisations are working to dispel the myths and break down the barriers to ensure that people with CP, and their families, can live full, contributing lives.

<b><u>Landmarks being lit green</u></b>	<b><u>World CP Day Proclamations</u></b>
Anvil Centre, New Westminster	Province of British Columbia
BC Parliament Ceremonial Entrance, Victoria	Burnaby
BC Place, Vancouver	Colwood
Duncan City Hall	City of North Vancouver
Fitzsimmons' Creek Bridge, Whistler	Fort Saint John
Fountain at Lafarge Lake, Coquitlam	Kamloops
The Plaza at Surrey City Hall	Kelowna
PNE Forum Readerboard, Vancouver	Langford
Port Coquitlam City Hall	New Westminster
Royal BC Museum, Victoria	Oak Bay
Jack Poole Olympic Cauldron, Vancouver	Parksville
Sails of Light, Canada Place, Vancouver	Port Alberni
Science World, Vancouver	Powell River
Trees at North Vancouver Civic Plaza	Prince George
Vancouver City Hall	Richmond
White Rock City Hall	Surrey
	Vancouver
	Whistler
	Williams Lake

View these landmarks on our interactive map: <http://bccerebralpalsy.com/events/world-cp-day/>

## Cerebral Palsy Association of BC

The Cerebral Palsy Association of BC was started in 1954 by a group of parents who wanted to assist their children living with CP to reach their maximum potential within society. We provide support, education, and information throughout BC. Our Mission is: To raise awareness of Cerebral Palsy in the community; To assist those living with Cerebral Palsy to reach their maximum potential; and To work to see those living with Cerebral Palsy recognize their place as equals in a diverse society.

There are over 10,000 people living with cerebral palsy in British Columbia.

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