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Upopolis, a social network for sick kids, Moncton's free WiFi service win IT Hero Awards

Information Technology Association of Canada honours community, corporate heroes

Toronto, ON – June 27, 2008 – The New Brunswick city that deployed a free WiFi network and Upopolis, a unique social networking service exclusively for hospitalized children were both feted here last night at the Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) Chairs' Dinner, with each receiving one of this year's **ITAC IT Hero Awards**.

The Community IT Hero Award, which recognizes an individual, group or not-for-profit organization that can demonstrate the creative application of information technology in improving the lives of Canadians, went to **the City of Moncton. Dan Babineau, Director of Information Systems**, who headed the team that developed and installed a free downtown WiFi network in Moncton, led the nomination.

Meanwhile, telecommunications company **TELUS** won the Corporate IT Hero Award, which recognizes a for-profit public or privately-owned business. TELUS donated development and technology services to support Upopolis, an online social network designed exclusively for hospitalized kids.

Winners were determined by a panel of judges who assessed the nominees and their projects for innovation and creativity, as well as initiative and leadership, positive and measurable impact on Canadians, and effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

"The judging panel was very impressed with the quality of the applications this year," said awards judge **Christian Couturier, Director General of the National Research Council of Canada**. "Each of the individuals and companies that were nominated should be applauded for the important work they're doing and the impact that their initiatives are having right across the country."

Community IT Hero Award – winner profile

In 2007, the City of Moncton developed and installed a free downtown WiFi network.

Up until then, an outdoor wireless mesh network had never been installed in Canada. Unlike traditional WiFi networks where individual access points are hardwired to the internet, a mesh network wirelessly transmits data to a central internet hub, making each access point part of the

network's data-transmission infrastructure that passes data from other access points across the network to the hub and back.

Moncton wanted to make its downtown more vibrant and believed wireless internet access could be a catalyst. Cost and scalability were concerns, both of which made a mesh network a better option. No new cable had to be laid, which made the project more affordable, and it can be scaled up to support more users or provide a wider reach simply by adding more access points.

The leadership of Dan Babineau, Director of Information Systems for the City of Moncton, meant the whole network was successfully installed in only three days. Today, the network is widely used, including by a surprising number of both tourist and business visitors to the New Brunswick city.

"It is with pleasure that I accept the ITAC IT Community Hero Award on behalf of the City of Moncton," said Babineau. "Thanks to the hard work of my team as well as our partners at Cisco and Hewlett-Packard, we were able to install a cost effective WiFi network that benefits Monctonians and its visitors. It's exciting to be part of a leading edge innovation and to see the benefits continue to unfold."

Corporate IT Hero Award – winner profile

When two young friends each had lengthy stays in the hospital, they felt disconnected from friends, family and had difficulty keeping up with schoolwork. With Upopolis, the first secure online social network for kids in hospital care, TELUS and its partners are empowering kids to learn about their illness, have access to their homework and teachers and stay connected with friends and family during what can be the most challenging time in a child's life.

Upopolis is a secure online social network designed exclusively for hospitalized kids. The site was created by the Kids' Health Links Foundation (KHLF) using development and technology services donated by TELUS. Upopolis provides a personal profile, secure mail, instant chat, discussion boards, personal blogs and links to child-friendly games, as well as a homework site, kid-friendly health and wellness information, and connections to other children with the same condition.

"We are honoured to receive the Corporate IT Hero Award," said Joe Natale, President, TELUS Business Solutions. "The private sector has a vital role to play in helping Canadian healthcare providers continue to modernize the patient experience, particularly for children and their families. Technology is so prevalent in young peoples' lives, and this kind of communications continuity can boost their spirits and their health. We are excited to be part of the Upopolis partnership and champion the power of technology to improve the healthcare experience for sick kids."

McMaster Children's Hospital rolled out the program in December 2007, with other children's hospitals across Canada launching in partnership with KHLF over the next year.

The child-friendly medical content was developed by KHLF in partnership with McMaster Children's Hospital.

About the ITAC IT Hero Awards

The ITAC IT Hero Awards, presented by Intel, celebrate and recognize creative applications of information technology that significantly improve the lives of Canadians and readily demonstrate social and economic benefit. The IT Hero Awards program was developed in 2001 by ITAC in partnership with Industry Canada. By naming winners in both Corporate and Community categories, the awards celebrate and recognize the achievements of people across Canada who used technology in innovative ways to help others. The award was launched as a feature of IT WEEK, a time to reflect on the successful impact of IT on society. For more information, visit www.itheroawards.com.

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