

Canadian  
Cancer  
Society



Société  
canadienne  
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## MANITOBA DIVISION

### Connecting Cancer and Physics Education...

#### **New Resource is Providing Students with Real-World Understanding about Radiation Physics, Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment Options**

*(Winnipeg, Manitoba – October 22, 2009) – Francine Yellowquill, like most youth her age, is very active in sports. As a member of the high school gymnastics team she practices several times a week. During one of her intricate routines, Francine recently injured her neck and back while performing a standing back handspring tuck. The pain became unbearable and Francine sought medical attention. It was during routine diagnostic x-ray and MRI imaging that her doctor discovered Francine has cancer...*

While Francine is a fictional character, Grade 12 students across the province will soon become acquainted with her story. A student resource package and teacher's guide is currently being distributed free to all public and independent secondary schools in Manitoba. The document, available in both English and French, is the result of a partnership between the Canadian Cancer Society - Manitoba Division and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY).

“This innovative and unique student resource package is not written in typical textbook fashion,” said Manitoba’s Education, Citizenship and Youth Minister Peter Bjornson. “Instead, it uses a case study approach that will make a science like physics more accessible and relevant to students. The project was inspired by the real life experiences of Manitoba educator Tanis Thiessen.”

“When I was in elementary school, my aunt Viola was diagnosed with colon cancer and passed away. Then in Grade 10, a fellow student and friend of mine was diagnosed with leukemia...he also faced an untimely death.” Thiessen said, “Just over ten years ago, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy. She is still cancer-free and continues to inspire me.”

Thiessen, who is now the principal at Elm Creek School and the author of the health and radiation physics resource, said the package follows Francine Yellowquill through her diagnosis, her questions about diagnostic techniques, treatment options, and her life after treatment. The Grade 12 Manitoba physics curriculum includes a unit on medical physics and is designed to educate students about radiation, the nuclear model of the atom, diagnostic and treatment technologies and how radiation affects the human body.

Mark McDonald, Executive Director for the Canadian Cancer Society, Manitoba Division said, “There is an expectation that many students in their lifetime will directly deal with cancer and/or its treatment patterns. Therefore, exposing students to an interactive and educational experience about the diagnosis, treatments and medical technologies surrounding cancer will be very beneficial.”

**On Thursday, October 22, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. the media is invited to attend the launch of the new “Health & Radiation Physics” resource guide at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate (86 West Gate).**

**Following spokespeople will be available for media interviews:**

- **Peter Bjornson**, Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth.
- **Mark McDonald**, Executive Director, Canadian Cancer Society.
- **Ian Proven**, Vice-President, Canadian Cancer Society Board of Directors.
- **Tanis Thiessen**, Author of the “Health & Radiation Physics” Resource Guide.

The Canadian Cancer Society is the largest national charitable funder of cancer research in Canada. Last year, the Canadian Cancer Society spent \$49.5 million on cancer research across Canada. Thanks to research, there has been considerable progress in the fight against cancer. Sixty-two per cent of people diagnosed with cancer in Canada today will survive. When you want to know more about cancer, visit our website at [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) or call our toll-free, bilingual Cancer Information Service at 1-888-939-3333.

***For more information, please contact:***

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