

# The Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia

## "Knowledge Centre for CP"

For Immediate Release:

### **CEREBRAL PALSY ASSOCIATION JOINS COMMUNITY AGENCIES IN CALLING FOR END TO HANDYDART STRIKE**

**December 23, 2009** -- The Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia (CPABC) is urging an immediate resolution to the almost two-month old HandyDART strike.

"This is a time of year when Canadians are doing a lot of travelling, a lot of errands, attending family celebrations, and other holiday festivities. We are seeing this type of activity becoming inaccessible to people with disabilities and seniors who are house-bound due to this ongoing HandyDart labour dispute," says Craig Langston, CPABC President. "Work, volunteer and social activities are essential to all members of the community, but particularly to those struggling to maintain an independent lifestyle."

Since the strike began on October 25, 2009, HandyDart has operated at essential service levels. As a result, the service is available only to people who require kidney dialysis or cancer treatment. This leaves out the thousands of other people with disabilities and seniors who need HandyDart to get around.

Tammy van der Kamp is a part-time Family & Individual Support Worker at Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia. "I normally take HandyDART several times a week to fulfill my work obligations. My clients have been unable to access me for the last two months. I can't afford to take a taxi and car-pooling isn't an option."

HandyDART employees stopped providing all but "essential services". The drivers are represented by Local 1724 of the Amalgamated Transit Union. Last year Translink contracted US-based MVT to run the HandyDART service. The company encountered resistance when it demanded that union members give up their existing pension plan for a RRSP. Last week, the two sides entered into mediation at the B.C. Labour Relations Board.

The Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia works to assist those living with CP to reach their maximum potential and realize their place as equals within a diverse society. "This doesn't feel equal to me," says Langston. "The transit strike just emphasizes how under-funded supports and services already are for people with disabilities, their families, seniors, and individuals living with cerebral palsy in British Columbia. We'd like to see a respectful and prompt end to this service disruption."

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#### Our Mission

- \* To raise awareness of Cerebral Palsy in the community;
- \* To assist those living with Cerebral Palsy to reach their maximum potential;
- \* To work to see those living with Cerebral Palsy realize their place as equals within a diverse society.

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