

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

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SHERWOOD PARK - Ophelia's Voice, a non-profit organization founded 5 years ago when Joanne Cave was 12 years old, is gearing up to celebrate its 5th anniversary as an organization empowering girls and building their leadership potential. Ophelia's Voice currently serves girls aged 10 - 14 in a leadership development program, as well as outreach to local schools and community groups on issues including body image, healthy sexuality, and media literacy. In the past year, Ophelia's Voice estimates reaching 400 girls across Alberta through more than 100 hours of workshops and presentations. Ophelia's Voice has a very successful history in the community, taking on a national policy-making project with the United Nations Association in Canada in 2008 with very grassroots beginnings.

"This is a time for us to celebrate our impact on girls, women, and the community," commented Joanne Cave. "Ophelia's Voice extends a lot farther than the girls we immediately work with. I think the community as a whole has been touched by the power of these local young women, just trying to make a difference."

Ophelia's Voice is at the closure of a 10-month leadership development program with 15 girls aged 11 - 14, which culminated in supporting them with mentors and mini-grants to launch their own community initiatives on topics as varied as the genocide in Darfur to animal cruelty. This anniversary celebration is also an opportunity to highlight the contributions of the participants, the adult women mentors who volunteer regularly, and the organization's board members.

The 5th anniversary celebration is from **7 - 9 p.m.** at **Festival Place** (100 Festival Way) on **Tuesday, June 30, 2009**. The event is free of charge and open to the community to participate. The evening will include a formal presentation on the past and future of Ophelia's Voice, an action project showcase by the current participants, refreshments and birthday cake, and speeches delivered by local politicians on the impact of girls in leadership. Ophelia's Voice also published an anthology of letters by girls and women on leadership, titled *Intergenerational Voices*, which will be available for purchase.

"This event is also intended to help us mark a transition as an organization," Joanne explained. "I will be attending the University of Toronto in the fall on a full scholarship, and we want to demonstrate to the community that there will still be a lot of Ophelia's Voice presence, even if the regular programs don't continue under my leadership. It's an end of a chapter, but also the beginning of a new one. The girls who have participated have developed tremendous leadership skills that will be put to good work in the community so our legacy continues." To attend, please RSVP to Joanne Cave at (780) 819 7035 or [joanne@opheliasvoice.org](mailto:joanne@opheliasvoice.org) before June 20, 2009.

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