

**For Immediate Release**

## **White Knight Toronto 2009 Raises Funds for Fall**

*May 12th Event Supports Free The Children's new Toronto school program*

**Thursday May 7, 2009 – Toronto, ON** – Schools in Toronto will get a kick start this September thanks to White Knight Toronto 2009. The inaugural fundraising gala is already sold to capacity and will benefit Free The Children's new Toronto-based school program, **GO Local**.

White Knight Toronto 2009 is being held on **May 12, 2009** for 300 guests at a private estate on Toronto's historic Bridle Path. The "White Party" will see guests dressed in white showing off their most fabulous, colourful or outrageous shoes to CTV's eTalk Host **Ben Mulroney** on the White Carpet. Global TV's **Leslie Roberts** will MC the evening inside as guests learn more about Free The Children's GO Local program and enjoy a unique surprise performance.

White Knight is an initiative of Canadian shoe entrepreneur Ron White and **The Ron White Foundation™**. White is well-known for his All Day Heels™ and as the founder of Canada's largest Shoe Drive for the Homeless. With lead sponsor, **Royal Bank of Canada**, White Knight Toronto 2009 will raise funds to enable Free The Children to roll out their unique proven youth empowerment program in more than 20 schools across the city beginning September 2009.

"We are so thrilled to be a part of this amazing fundraising effort, and to have the chance to work with such a dedicated and passionate group who've come to us and offered to help build and expand our programs in this way," said Free The Children founder **Craig Kielburger**. "The funds raised by White Knight and the tireless efforts of Ron White and the board mean that we can create programs in our own backyard and begin making a difference in the lives of students this fall."

"At RBC, we're focused on helping youth and programs that ensure there are no barriers to success so everyone has a chance to succeed. We live in a world in which we are all interconnected and where change can be swift when we focus together," said **Jennifer Tory**, RBC's Regional President for the Greater Toronto Region. "Today's youth is engaged and active in ways unimaginable just a few years ago. Free the Children's new youth empowerment program, GO Local, recognizes we are ushering in a new era of social responsibility around the world and gives local youth the educational resources and leadership skills needed in order to effect positive change at home and abroad."

"I cannot believe that in less than a year we have been able to establish a foundation, assemble an amazing Advisory Board and launch our first fundraising gala benefiting youth in our own backyards," said **Ron White**. "FTC is an amazing partner and we are honored to be working with them on this project. I am also indebted to White Knight Chair, Jeffrey Latimer along with the entire Advisory

Board for their amazing team effort in making this event a sell out success during such extraordinary economic times... it's truly heartwarming".

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For more information on White Knight Toronto 2009 and future events please go to: [www.whiteknightgala.com](http://www.whiteknightgala.com).

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### **ABOUT GO LOCAL**

Go Local is Free The Children's latest leadership initiative aimed at offering resource poor schools programs where students learn about social justice issues while developing leadership skills that will enable them to effect positive change in themselves, in their communities and beyond. The goal of the program is to encourage youth to take action to help improve their own lives and the communities around them, which in turn translates into a lower high school drop-out rates and fewer instances of violent behaviour in schools.

### **ABOUT FREE THE CHILDREN (FTC)**

Free The Children is the world's largest network of children helping children through education, with more than one million youth involved in our innovative education and development programs in 45 countries. Founded in 1995 by international child rights activist Craig Kielburger, Free The Children has a proven track record of success. The organization has received the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (also known as the Children's Nobel Prize), the Human Rights Award from the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, and has formed successful partnerships with leading school boards and Oprah's Angel Network. Visit [www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com) to learn more.

### **ABOUT THE RON WHITE FOUNDATION**

The Ron White Foundation is a new registered charitable foundation that focuses on raising funds, awareness and education for human rights based issues both locally and internationally. It was created by Ron White, a leading Canadian shoe entrepreneur with seven retail locations, who is well-known for his dedication to philanthropy, and is famous for his All Day Heels™. Over the past 13 years, through his stores, Ron has operated an annual fundraiser in partnership with the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and has run Canada's largest Shoe Drive for the Homeless. The Ron White Foundation is a culmination of Ron's philanthropic endeavors. Through his Foundation, Ron now rolls together his dedication to give back and make the world a better place, with his love of fashion and shoes. Taking his annual giving to the next level, Ron

has assembled a talented and seasoned Advisory Board to help bring about White Knight, a fresh fundraising event. For more information please visit: [www.whiteknightgala.com](http://www.whiteknightgala.com).