



# News Release

For Release: November 9, 2009

## **SASKATOON OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY COMMITTEE LAUNCHES PLANS AND NAMES COMMUNITY TORCHBEARER**

At Oskayak High School this morning, the Saskatoon Olympic Torch Relay Organizing Committee revealed some of its plans to welcome the Olympic Torch on its cross-Canada journey when it reaches Saskatoon on Monday, January 11, 2010 over the noon hour.

One of the highlights of the Torch's arrival is the Community Torchbearer, who has been selected to carry the Torch on its final leg in Saskatoon. Local teacher, athlete, and role model Jacqueline Lavalée has been named as Saskatoon's community torchbearer for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay. She will have the honour of lighting the cauldron on stage in Saskatoon during the two-hour community celebration at Kiwanis Park. Jacqueline is a teacher at Oskayak High School who motivates and inspires youth to overcome obstacles by setting and achieving goals for themselves. Ms. Lavalée is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, an All-Star and All-Canadian athlete in both soccer and basketball, and is an inductee in the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame.

"Jacqueline embodies the Olympic spirit of hard work, teamwork, inspiring others, and reaching for your goals," said Mayor Donald Atchison. "We are so very proud to have her represent our community to the rest of the world."

Also on hand at the launch was Olympian Joan McCusker with an inspiring message for the students. Part of the pre-torch activities involves four Olympians visiting over 60 schools in Saskatoon in November to deliver a message of setting goals, being one's best, and teamwork.

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Media, for more information:

Jill Cope, Chair  
Saskatoon Olympic Torch Relay  
975-3461

Kim Ali, Event Coordinator  
Saskatoon Olympic Torch Relay  
652-1400

Todd Brandt, Marketing Chair,  
Saskatoon Olympic Torch Relay  
931-7574

## **OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY BACKGROUNDER**

### **Biography of Jaqueline Lavallee** *Saskatoon's Community Torch Bearer*

Jacqueline's quiet nature draws many people to her, and she is passionate about bringing out the best in others. Lavallee is a Métis woman who is committed to improving her community and the lives of her students at Oskayak High School in Saskatoon. This school offers a spiritually based educational program deeply rooted in Aboriginal tradition which allows Lavallee to connect her culture and beliefs with her desire to work with young people. She motivates and inspires youth to overcome obstacles by setting and achieving goals for themselves.

As a student athlete at the University of Saskatchewan, she played both women's soccer and basketball for five years. With the soccer program she was a three-time Canada West All-Star midfielder and an All-Canadian in 1999. As a member of Huskie basketball, she was a three-time Canada West All-Star point guard and an All-Canadian in 2001. She played internationally for Canada at three tournaments and represented Canada twice at the World University Games.

Lavallee has been coaching basketball for the past 13 years at many different levels. She has been an assistant coach with the University of Saskatchewan Women's Basketball team for the past seven years. She was inducted into the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame in 2008 and also received the 2008 National Aboriginal Coaching Award. She developed and is the head coach of a program called "Team Spirit", which is an Aboriginal Girls Basketball program that is funded through the Hoops and Dreams program. Most recently, she was named head coach of the U17 women's national team which quailed last summer for the 2010 World Championships in France.

### **General Information:**

- The 106-day Olympic Torch Relay, presented by Coca-Cola and RBC, will visit more than 1,030 communities and places of interest in every province and territory. It will travel over 45,000 kilometres across Canada.
- There are 12,000 torchbearers involved with the Torch Relay.
- The 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games will be held in Vancouver and Whistler from February 12 to 28, 2010. The Paralympic Winter Games from March 12 to 21, 2010.
- For more information on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay, visit [www.vancouver2010.com/torchrelay](http://www.vancouver2010.com/torchrelay).