

***Running the Sahara* documentary to debut in Ottawa-Gatineau at Special Screening**

Ottawa-Gatineau, May 25, 2009 – Narrated and produced by Matt Damon, *Running the Sahara* is the true story of three men (Charlie Engle, Kevin Lin and Ray Zahab) who embark on a mind-boggling pursuit: running 7500 kilometers across the entire Sahara Desert. They average 70 kilometers per day for 111 days without a single day off. Nothing prepares them for the challenges they face - dehydration, sand storms, and blisters the size of baseballs. The journey takes a physical and emotional toll on the team and although the oppressive conditions inspire moments of doubt, each man is determined to reach the finish.

On **Tuesday June 9, 2009**, you are invited to a special screening of this inspirational documentary, which was filmed in an effort to raise awareness for the drinking water crisis in Africa. Following the screening, participate in a Q&A with Ray Zahab, co-star of the film and local resident, who will talk about his transformative experience.

Proceeds from ticket sales will support the **Ryan's Well Foundation**, a charity formed from the commitment of one boy, Ryan Hreljac. Ryan's Well has three primary goals: **BUILD, EDUCATE** and **MOTIVATE** – building water and sanitation projects in developing countries; educating students about the need for clean water and the possibility of making a difference in their world; and motivating people, especially youth, to take action and make a positive change in our world. Today the Ryan's Well Foundation has built 502 water projects in 16 developing countries serving over 620,000 people. (www.ryanswell.ca)

Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2009
Reception: 6:30 p.m.
Screening: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Starcité Hull (115 boulevard du Plateau, Gatineau)
Cost: \$35.00 per person (Cost includes admission and reception)

Tickets may be purchased at local Gatineau businesses – Les saisons café, Greg Christies Ski and Cycle Works or by calling Kathy Adams at 819-827-4797.

Speakers

Ray Zahab, Adventurer and Ultra Marathoner: On November 1, 2006 Ray and two other runners set out on an epic expedition to cross the Sahara Desert by foot. After witnessing and experiencing the water crisis and malaria epidemic in Africa, Ray decided to dedicate his future adventures to raising awareness and funding for causes that he supports and believes in.

In 2008, Ray, and two other Canadians, broke the world speed record for an unsupported expedition from Hercules Inlet to the South Pole. In the process, Ray became the first person to trek this traditional route to the South Pole solely on foot-without the use of skis. This expedition was completed as part of Ray's organization, impossible2Possible, a non-profit organization with a mission to inspire and educate youth through adventure learning, and inclusion and participation in expeditions.

Ray is on the Ryan's Well Foundation's Board of Directors, the official Athletic Ambassador to the ONExONE organization, and is a representative of SpreadTheNet. Ray was the recipient of the ONExONE Difference Award in 2007.

Ryan Hreljac, Founder, Ryan's Well Foundation: In 1998, 6-year-old Ryan Hreljac was shocked to learn that children in Africa had to walk many kilometres every day just to fetch water, the most basic element for human survival. Deciding he needed to build a well for a village in Africa, he did chores for four months in order to earn his first \$70. Ryan's first well was built in 1999 at a school in a northern Ugandan village. The Ryan's Well Foundation was founded in 2001.

Now 18, Ryan Hreljac is a compelling voice for those impacted by the water crisis throughout the developing world. He has received many awards for his work, including the Order of Ontario, the Canadian Meritorious Service Medal, OneXOne Difference Award, Canadian Peace Award – Youth, the Top 20 under 20 Youth Award, and the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Volunteers. He has been featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show and on CNN and CBC, as well as in numerous books, magazines and newspapers. He is recognized by UNICEF as a Global Youth Leader.

For more information or tickets to attend the event, please contact:

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