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Ottawa, December 1, 2023

The School of Dance is proud to announce the 2024 **Jim and Ginette Munson Encouragement Awards**.

The Awards honour two great Canadians and their ongoing commitment to The School of Dance including significant support of our DragonFly Programme for learners with Down syndrome. We have chosen to honour Jim and Ginette through the hallmarks of their own commitment to young people growing and learning in education, sports, and the arts by focusing the awards on diversity, confidence building, and hope.

The two \$500 Encouragement Awards in honour of Jim and Ginette Munson go to **Myriam Garcia Cournoyer**, a member of our DragonFly® Programme who is now taking a leadership role in preparing materials for our younger DragonFly students, and to **Sebastian Henderson**, a young dancer in Level 2 of our Professional Ballet Division. Both deserve encouragement as they reach for their dreams.

Senator Jim Munson has focused his work on the disability community. In his 17 years in the Senate he has worked closely with the autism community in building the framework for a national autism strategy. He was responsible for a landmark Senate report called Pay Now or Pay Later, autism families in crisis.

In his political work, he was the Senate sponsor of the Accessible Canada Act, a piece of legislation which has transformed the disability landscape. A strong believer in the world of inclusion, the Senator has also advocated for Special Olympics Canada. It's here where he helped lay the groundwork for sustainable funding for this national program. On a local level, the Senator and his wife have worked with a number of organizations, two of which are close to the hearts of Senator Munson and his wife Ginette: Quick Start Autism, which offers early intervention for children with autism and DragonFly, which develops critical skills needed by learners with Down syndrome. It's at DragonFly where the Senator embraces the organization's motto of building inclusion one person at a time.

Ginette Munson is an educator and a learning/change consultant with many years of practice in the public and private sector. With her husband, Senator Jim Munson, she has applied her experience and strategy planning skills to advocate for inclusion and support development initiatives in the disability and in the autism communities.

If you would like more information on the Jim and Ginette Munson Encouragement Awards or if you wish to make a charitable contribution to the Jim and Ginette Munson Encouragement Awards, please contact:

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