



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Will your community be crowned Canada's Most Active Community?** *ParticipACTION launches nation-wide physical activity challenge*

**Toronto, May 31, 2019** – In the head-down busyness of our daily lives, many of us have become isolated with between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of Canadians reporting feeling persistent loneliness or social isolation. That's why ParticipACTION launched its Community Better Challenge - starting May 31 to June 16, 2019 - to get Canadians across the country to sit less and move more together.

"A great way to build strong social connections is through physical activity and sport," said Elio Antunes, President and CEO of ParticipACTION. "We invite all Canadians, organizations and schools to participate in the inaugural ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge – it's a great way to get physically active, connect with your community, and potentially win a cash prize to be invested in local physical activity initiatives."

It's human nature to want to bond with others – and it's good for us. Unfortunately, much of the socialization we need has been replaced with screens and devices. Not only can physical activity help break down walls and act as a building block to grow stronger communities, but it can also be the motivation people need. In fact, the 2018 ParticipACTION *Pulse Report* revealed that 70 per cent of Canadians would be more physically active if their family and friends were also active.

"One of my most important jobs is helping Canadians stay healthy, and being active is an essential part of that," said the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health. "The Community Better Challenge is one way that we can all work together to encourage and increase physical activity. I'm pleased to support this initiative to get Canadians to move more and sit less. The Government of Canada's investment of \$25 million to ParticipACTION from Budget 2018 will reach Canadians where they live, learn, work and play."

The ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge is open to all communities and individuals, ultimately crowning the community with the most tracked minutes of physical activity as **Canada's Most Active Community** taking into account the population of the community relative to tracked minutes.

Canada's Most Active Community will be awarded with \$150,000, along with five regional community winners who will receive \$20,000 each, to support local physical activity initiatives. Finalists and the grand prize winner will be announced at the end of June 2019.

"As a former athlete, coach and official, I know the joys and benefits of being active and participating in sport," said the Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science and Sport. "The ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge is an innovative and exciting way to get children and their families moving, which is the first step toward getting involved in sport. I encourage all Canadians to take part!"

It's easy to take part in the challenge and help your community win:

- Individuals can download the new free [ParticipACTION app](#) where they can track their physical activity minutes and contribute to their community's total minutes during the challenge period. In addition, app users who track their minutes during the Challenge will be entered into individual weekly, monthly and quarterly draws for great prizes.
- Communities, organizations, schools and families that get active as a group can track their group's physical activity minutes on the Community Better Challenge website by registering at [participACTION.com/challenge](http://participACTION.com/challenge).

ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge rally teams will be visiting communities across the country encouraging Canadians to participate by tracking their physical activity minutes on the ParticipACTION app or online. Visit [participACTION.com/challenge](http://participACTION.com/challenge) to see if the rally team is stopping in your community!

If a rally team isn't stopping in your area, here are some fun ways to get active as a community:

- **Start a running or walking club** with people in your neighbourhood.
- **Group exercise and fitness classes** are a great way to meet new people.
- **Taking your dog for a walk** can help you meet and connect with neighbours.
- **Yoga anyone?** Check in with your local yoga studio to see if they host, or would be interested in hosting, any classes in a community park.

The ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge is part of ParticipACTION's *Everything gets better when you get active* campaign, which shines a light on all the ways physical activity can make your life better – beyond weight or physical appearance. Visit [participACTION.com](http://participACTION.com) to learn how physical activity can make your life better.

The ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge is supported by the Government of Canada, the Government of B.C, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and national media partner Corus.

### **About ParticipACTION**

ParticipACTION is a national non-profit organization that helps Canadians sit less and move more. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION works with its partners, which include sport, physical activity, recreation organizations, government and corporate sponsors, to make physical activity a vital part of everyday life. ParticipACTION is generously supported by the Government of Canada. For more information, please visit [participACTION.com](http://participACTION.com).

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