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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Attention: Health/Food/Lifestyle Section Editors

ADABC seminar helps parents manage anxious kids

Almost 4,200 Tri-Cities area children held hostage by anxiety disorders

Vancouver – Raising children in a volatile world is challenging enough, but it's especially difficult for parents of children suffering from anxiety disorders.

Children with anxiety disorders are among the best and the brightest, but are afraid to engage in life. An anxiety disorder may first present as an unwillingness to participate in normal activities most kids enjoy such as sports, sleepovers and even attending school, as well as in somatic symptoms such as chronic stomachaches and headaches.

Port Coquitlam resident Jeannie Rohr knows all too well how this complex malady can soon take over and rob children and families of a quality of life most take for granted. One of her children was recently diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

"As a parent, you are always balancing, always thinking ahead and anticipating situations that may trigger your child's anxiety," said Rohr.

Anxiety disorders in children are more common than one would think and can get in the way of any kind of future or hope for a normal life. Approximately 10 per cent of children suffer from one or more anxiety disorders, and 80 per cent go untreated. That amounts to almost 4,200 children in the Tri-Cities area.

Thankfully, help is available. To help educate parents about anxiety disorders and facilitate early intervention, the Anxiety Disorders Association of BC (ADABC), in cooperation with the F.O.R.C.E. Society for Kids Mental Health, is offering a free and helpful seminar on Jan. 15 in the Tri-Cities area on parenting children with anxiety disorders. The seminar will teach parents how to identify if a child has an anxiety disorder, and how to manage the problem at home.

"A huge challenge for parents is how long they have to wait before an anxiety disorder is identified and an effective management plan put in place," said Dr. Sarah Newth, a cognitive behavior therapist who treats children with anxiety disorders, and who will be facilitating the Tri-Cities seminar.

According to Newth, common signs of anxiety disorders include: cognitive symptoms (e.g. difficulty concentrating, and upsetting thoughts, images or urges); physical symptoms (e.g. stomachaches, rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, muscle tension); and problematic behaviours (e.g. avoidance, withdrawal, excessive reassurance seeking, compulsions, excessive tearfulness or tantrums).

"Parents who attend the ADABC Family Skill Building Seminar will get access to high quality information. We will provide tips on how to recognize the signs of anxiety problems in kids, basic

skills that kids and parents can practice on a daily basis to reduce symptoms, and where to go for more information or resources,” added Newth.

The ADABC-sponsored Family Skill Building Seminar takes place in Port Moody on Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. at the Inlet Theatre at the Port Moody Civic Centre, 100 Newport Drive. ADABC will also be hosting seminars in Vancouver, Abbotsford, Victoria, and Richmond. For more information, call 604.525.7597, email info@anxietybc.com, or visit www.anxietybc.com.

Funding for ADABC programs is provided by Fraser Health, the Provincial Health Services Authority, the Ministry for Children and Family Development, and other regional health authorities and foundations. ADABC members play a key role in supporting the ongoing dissemination of resources and advocacy with their membership fees and donations, while the public and corporate sponsors assist ADABC during its fund-raising campaigns. ADABC is very grateful to all its supporters and well-wishers.

ADABC is one of seven provincial agencies that make up the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. These agencies are working together to provide high quality, evidence-based information on mental health and substance use to help individuals and families living with mental health and substance use problems live productive, fulfilling lives. Funding is provided by the Provincial Health Services Authority with additional support from the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The Anxiety Disorders Association of BC, a non-profit organization, was established in 1999 by a group of concerned consumers, family members and professionals. Its mission is to increase awareness and promote education of anxiety disorders, increase access to evidence-based treatment, and encourage and develop new treatments and delivery.

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