



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 4:00AM
MONDAY, MAY 3, 2010**

Coast Mental Health Announces Sixth 2010 Courage To Come Back Award Recipient FAHREEN MAPARA named as recipient in YOUTH category

VANCOUVER, B.C. May 3, 2010 – Coast Mental Health announced the final of six award recipients of a 2010 Courage To Come Back Award. **10 year old Fahreen Mapara of Pitt Meadows** has been named as the 2010 Courage To Come Back Award recipient in the Youth category. The Courage Awards gala will be held Thursday, May 6th.

Feisty, determined, courageous, helpful, enthusiastic are just a few of the words used to describe ten year old Fahreen Mapara.

Fahreen was born six weeks prematurely with a trache-esophageal fistula, a serious condition that causes her to aspirate food or drink into her lungs. She spent the first six months of her life in hospital undergoing many surgeries, which paralyzed her vocal chords, epiglottis and swallowing muscles. She went home with a permanent tracheotomy for breathing, a permanent gastrostomy tube for feeding, and a nurse in attendance. There she thrived and developed beyond all medical expectations.

Already determined before she was three, Fahreen gradually learned how to swallow, to chew and to manipulate her food with her tongue. For a short time she was able to enjoy eating ice cream or her favourite 'mac and cheese' lunch, but recently the doctors told her she would have to stop eating indefinitely as she was still aspirating into her lungs.

She started learning sign language at four years old. Then with the help of her nurses and speech therapists - and her determined spirit – she learned to speak in spite of her paralyzed vocal chords. Now she is eager to join into conversations. As the youngest child in a family whose native languages are Gujarati and Kutchi, Fahreen attends ESL classes as well as speech and language support.

Fahreen has courageously faced many challenges in her short life. Several times a year she has to fight chest infections. Each time she has changed schools, she has had to overcome rejection from both her peers and adults, who question her abilities or who feel awkward around her – the tubes, unusual sounds as she tries to speak, her feeding routines, her inability to participate in many of the childhood activities like swimming or sleepovers. She carries a backpack and pump to deliver her nutritional formula while she watches other children enjoying their treats.

But Fahreen has learned to move on from disappointment and rejection. Her naturally sunny nature and willingness to help wins people over. She doesn't complain about her medical problems or expect special treatment or attention; instead she reaches out to others, particularly those younger than herself. Her teachers say she is always the first to offer help in class or in other school activities such as welcoming new students, volunteering in workshops, accompanying younger children on field trips. This year, she is helping present a workshop on "Language and Identity: Embracing and Honoring Diversity." She will share with other students her experience of what it is like to be immersed in an unfamiliar language and culture. Fahreen also volunteers at her mosque and helps with younger children on her visits to Children's Hospital.

With determination, courage and optimism, she faces new challenges with a smile and a joke and finds a way to succeed. This year, she has learned to play the recorder and to skate, and has recently earned a yellow belt in martial arts.

Fahreen is an inspiration to her peers, medical team and teachers. One teacher says, "Fahreen is a perfect model of work ethic for my own children." In accepting this Coast Mental Health 2010 Courage To Come Back Award, Fahreen says, "I treat everyone the way I want to be treated."

Coast is proud to have Fahreen Mapara as its 2010 Courage To Come Back Award recipient in the Youth category.

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Fahreen Mapara named as recipient in CTCB Youth category

Fahreen will receive her Courage To Come Back Award at the 12th Annual Gala Dinner at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver on Thursday, May 6th. For tickets, call 604-675-2328 or purchase online at www.coastmentalhealth.com

About Courage To Come Back:

The Courage To Come Back Awards celebrate people who have inspired others as they have courageously battled back from illness, adversity or injury. Through Courage, British Columbians are acknowledged for their accomplishments, positive attitudes and willingness to give back to their communities. Awards are given in six categories including: addiction, medical, mental health, physical rehabilitation, social adversity and youth. Recipients are chosen by volunteer panels of community leaders and category experts.

By presenting the stories of six amazing recipients each year at The Courage To Come Back Awards, Coast Mental Health strives to offer hope to all those suffering from illness, adversity or injury and demonstrate that all people have value and dignity. At Coast, our clients with a mental illness show tremendous courage in their daily lives. In our housing facilities and service centers, a community of people strive to overcome illness, adversity and stigma, and we strive to support their recovery. Their triumphs, like those of the Courage Award recipients, motivate and inspire us.

About Coast Mental Health:

Since 1972, Coast Mental Health has been providing high-quality housing, employment programs, social opportunities and other community mental health services for people with serious and persistent mental illnesses. We know that people with a mental illness can and do recover. Our services include:

- Mental Health Resource Centre – 500 Active Members, 220 meals served daily
- Homeless Outreach program serving approximately 60 people per month
- Coast Clubhouse - 400 Members, 80 Meals Served Daily, 80 Jobs Weekly
- Community Homes – 12 Houses, Over 120 Housed in Vancouver and Burnaby
- Supported Housing - ~650 Housed
- Coast Cottages - 50 Housed
- At Home/Chez Soi - 100 Housed by 2011
- Coast Transitional Housing - 44 Housed
- PACT Employment Services - 160+ Served Annually
- Coast Social Enterprises - 20 Employed
- Financial Trust Program - 350+ Served

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