**The Down Syndrome Community Applies To Be The First Humans On The Endangered Species List**

*Effort is part of larger push to secure imperative funding and protection*

**Toronto, November 2, 2018 –** Each time a new species becomes endangered, alarm bells are raised by conservationists and scientists who immediately take action to secure protection and resources that will ensure their survival.

But what happens when an at-risk population is a group of humans with particular characteristics, such as people with Down syndrome?

In some countries like the U.S., there have been 30% fewer people born with Down syndrome than projected, and in a few countries, that number is approaching zero. Because of this, the Down syndrome community has less of a voice in the world today, resulting in a lack of housing, education and funding for a community that desperately needs support.

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) is applying to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the organization that manages the Red List of Threatened Species, to have people with Down syndrome become the first humans to ever be included, in an effort to advocate for similar kinds of funding, protections, government intervention and public awareness that species on the Endangered List receive.

CDSS is launching its Endangered Syndrome campaign to coincide with Canadian Down Syndrome Week from November 1-7, 2018. In addition to the IUCN application, the campaign includes a series of videos and print ads featuring people with Down syndrome representing endangered species. Lines like “A lion can roar for help. I can only ask” and “Just as fierce. Just as endangered” are designed to raise awareness of the issues they face. The campaign was created pro-bono by Toronto-based agency FCB Canada.

“You may not think about it, but the reality is that people with Down syndrome face far more challenges than most of us, and they need more support than they’re getting. Whether it's underfunded support programs for education, higher rates of unemployment, extended waitlists for appropriate housing, or even just negative public perception and stigma, the challenges faced by people with Down syndrome aren’t decreasing-they’re increasing,” says Laura LaChance, Board Chair, CDSS.

“As a parent of an infant with Down syndrome, being a part of this campaign is important not only in raising awareness, but also in creating change to ensure my daughter and other people with Down syndrome live healthy, happy and productive lives,” says Kylie Samson, mother of six-month-old Ava, who appears dressed as an endangered sea turtle in the campaign.

CDSS has enlisted the help of environmental lawyer Adam Chamberlain to submit a letter of application to the IUCN. The goal is to present the application and petition of the public’s support to the United Nations on World Down syndrome Day on March 21, 2019, in the hopes of starting a conversation about funding. Supporters are asked to visit [EndangeredSyndrome.com](http://endangeredsyndrome.com) to sign a petition supporting the application to the IUCN and to take part in the UN petition.

The campaign is supported by candid interviews with parents, people living with Down syndrome and experts that serve to deepen the dialogue surrounding the challenges people in the Down syndrome community face. The campaign also includes posters, billboards and pre-roll videos directing people to [EndangeredSyndrome.com](http://endangeredsyndrome.com), where the public can get more information, support the application to the IUCN, spread the message and donate to the CDSS so people with Down syndrome can live their best, protected lives.

“We wanted to find a provocative way to raise awareness around the need for funding and support for this incredible group of people,” says Nancy Crimi-Lamanna, chief creative officer of FCB Canada. “We are proud to be partners with CDSS in this effort and hope the outcome is more protection for people living with Down syndrome.”

“Endangered Syndrome” is The Canadian Down Syndrome Society’s latest campaign launched in support of the community, following the globally awarded and highly acclaimed “[Down Syndrome Answers](https://vimeo.com/222202561)” and “[Anything but Sorry](https://anythingbutsorry.com/)” initiatives launched in 2016 and 2017.

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**About Canadian Down Syndrome Society:**

Founded in 1987, The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) is a national non-profit organization providing information, advocacy and education about Down syndrome. CDSS supports self-advocates, their parents, families and communities through all stages of life, as well as educators and medical professionals who work with individuals who have Down syndrome. Visit <http://www.cdss.ca/> for more information #SeeTheAbility

**About FCB:**

FCB (Foote, Cone & Belding) is a global, fully integrated marketing communications company with a heritage of creativity and success dating from 1873. Based on a deeply developed understanding of diversified local markets and global cultures, FCB focuses on creating “Never Finished” campaign ideas for clients that reflect a deep understanding of the brand’s past, a respect for the present and an anticipation of the future potential. With more than 8,000 people in 109 operations in 80 countries, the company is part of the Interpublic Group of Companies (NYSE: IPG). With operations in Toronto and Montreal that include FCB Health (healthcare marketing), Fuel Content (content creation), FCB/SIX (CRM) and Segal (licensing). FCB Canada is proud to serve some of the world’s most admired brands, including Air Canada, BMO, Beiersdorf, Clorox, Mondelez International, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation and Ontario Lottery & Gaming. To learn more about FCB Canada, visit fcbtoronto.com or fcb.com and follow us on Twitter and Instagram: @FCB\_Toronto