****

**For Immediate Release**

**Friday, March 15, 2019**

**News Release / Photo Opportunity**

**Thursday, March 21st is World Down Syndrome Day**

**Calgary, Alta.** - The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) invites all Canadians to celebrate and #SeeTheAbility on March 21, recognized by the United Nations as World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD). On March 21 people with Down syndrome and those who live and work with them raise awareness, advocate for rights, inclusion and the general well being of people with Down syndrome.

Celebrations will go on throughout the day across our country, from classroom events to national landmarks lighting up in blue and yellow, the international colours that promote Down syndrome awareness. Members of CDSS’s VATTA group – Voices Around the Table for Self-Advocacy, will also be presenting to groups and some at mini-conferences in their communities. VATTA is a small group of self-advocates facilitated by CDSS. VATTA has been a part of CDSS since 2005, their mission aims to give the CDSS Board of Directors guidance on key issues important to them and on communications.

Media Opportunities:

* Classroom Visits – Young adults with Down syndrome speaking to classes about inclusion, answering questions about Down syndrome, and #RockYourSocks celebrations (see below).
* Rock Your Socks Celebrations – Classroom, work and other groups are encouraged to wear mismatched fun socks and take a break to dance in recognition of March 21, known as #DanceOn321, #RockYourSocks and #LotsofSocks.
* Lighting of Monuments – Landmarks across the country will be lit the evening of March 21 in blue and yellow, the international colours of Down syndrome. A list of the confirmed attractions is below.
* VATTA Groups – One on one interviews with this group of exceptional adults are available on request.

**-more-**

**Interview Opportunities**: CDSS offers interview opportunities about Down syndrome, the March 21 celebrations, and other stories of interest.

**Photo Opportunities**: Please contact our main office and we will connect you and work with a local group, attraction, VATTA member or affiliate group to arrange details.

Confirmed City Monument(s)

Calgary Calgary Tower, Telus Spark, Saddledome Interior

Edmonton High Level Bridge (tba)

Toronto Toronto City Sign, CN Tower

Niagara Niagara Falls

Vancouver Sails of Light

Victoria Parliament Legislative

Winnipeg Forks Market

Charlottetown City Hall

Halifax City Hall

Newfoundland Signal Hill (tba)

**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

To arrange interviews, photography, or for more details on what is happening in your area, please contact:

Kristen Halpen

Marketing & Communications

Canadian Down Syndrome Society

Toll-Free 800.883.5608

Mobile 587.575.9432

Email kristenh@CDSS.ca