

# News Release



April 20, 2009

## **Blogging all patients! BC Children's Hospital launches social network for kids**

*Introducing 'Upopolis', Canada's first secure online community keeping kids in hospitals connected to each other*

**Vancouver, B.C.** – BC Children's Hospital, TELUS and Kids' Health Links Foundation today announced the launch of Upopolis, the first secure online social network for kids in hospital care in Western Canada.

Created by Kids' Health Links Foundation (KHLF) and powered by TELUS, Upopolis.com provides the best features of social networking for young patients who often feel disconnected when they're in the hospital. Upopolis provides a personal profile, personal blogs, instant chat and child-friendly games. The site also provides unique features to kids in hospital like a homework site to stay up-to-date with their schoolwork, links to kid-friendly health and wellness information, and connections to other children with the same condition.

"Our hospital offers very specialized pediatric care that is unique in the province, so we take in some seriously ill and injured kids who will really benefit from Upopolis to help them stay connected to their loved ones," said Larry Gold, president, BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, agencies of the Provincial Health Services Authority. "We are committed to bringing the best possible care for our young patients and Upopolis will help to enhance their hospital experience."

"The private sector has an important role to play in helping Canadian healthcare providers continue to modernize and improve the patient experience," said Darren Entwistle, TELUS President and CEO. "Today's kids are inseparable from the technology that connects them with the world, their families and their friends. For kids in the hospital, Upopolis bridges that connection. TELUS is excited to be part of a partnership that champions the power of technology to improve the healthcare experience for young people in hospital."

Through a unique partnership with Kids' Health Links Foundation, TELUS provides the technology to develop and build Upopolis. TELUS continues to provide site expansion, ongoing access to Upopolis, managed Web hosting, and application support and maintenance services.

Kid's Health Links and TELUS launched the program last year at McMaster Children's Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario and since then it is expanding to other hospitals across Canada, including IWK Health Centre in Halifax.

"We had a vision when we started Upopolis to connect kids in hospitals across Canada. Launching today at BC Children's Hospital is a monumental step in helping us to reach that goal," said Basile Papaevangelou, chairman and founder of KHLF. "With the help of the hospitals and TELUS, we continue to expand this program across Canada helping kids in care to connect with each other on a national platform."

The online support network was inspired by the hospital experiences of two teenaged friends, Christina Papaevangelou and Katy McDonald. In February 2002, Christina was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at McMaster Children's Hospital with a life-threatening illness. Shortly after, Katy was diagnosed with cancer and had to be hospitalized for a long period of time, feeling disconnected from friends, family and keeping up with schoolwork. Sadly, Katy lost her battle with cancer. However, their friendship and common experiences inspired Christina to explore ways to help kids in care stay connected.

#### **About Kids' Health Links Foundation**

Kids' Health Links was founded by Basile Papaevangelou and his daughter Christina to connect, through technology, children in health care facilities across Canada with friends and family, their teachers and schoolwork. Kids' Health Links Foundation created Upopolis - an innovative, private online community for children in care. The Kids' Health Links technology solutions help to alleviate stress, isolation and loneliness for children in medical care in order to help children heal faster and better to overcome traumatic medical experiences.

#### **BC Children's Hospital**

BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides expert care for the province's most seriously ill or injured children, including newborns and adolescents. Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, part of BC Children's, offers specialized services to children with disabilities and their families from across the province. BC Children's is an academic health centre affiliated with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the Child & Family Research Institute. For more information, please visit [www.bcchildrens.ca](http://www.bcchildrens.ca)

#### **About TELUS**

TELUS (TSX: T, T.A; NYSE: TU) is a leading national telecommunications company in Canada, with \$9.7 billion of annual revenue and 11.6 million customer connections including 6.1 million wireless subscribers, 4.2 million wireline network access lines and 1.2 million Internet subscribers. Led since 2000 by President and CEO, Darren Entwistle, TELUS provides a wide range of communications products and services including data, Internet protocol (IP), voice, entertainment and video. In support of our philosophy to give where we live, TELUS, our team members and retirees have contributed \$137 million to charitable and not-for-profit organizations and volunteered more than 2.6 million hours of service to local communities since 2000. Nine TELUS Community Boards across Canada lead our local philanthropic initiatives. For more information about TELUS, please visit [telus.com](http://telus.com).

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