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Special Olympics BC benefitting from Safeway's strong support in April campaign and beyond

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sean Beddows is part of an amazing team working in the Ocean Park Safeway store. He's also part of an amazing team as one of 3,800 **Special Olympics BC** (SOBC) athletes around the province. With the **Canada Safeway Families Living with Disabilities** campaign running from **March 31 to May 1**, Sean exemplifies both sides of the story.

Sean, who has worked at the Ocean Park Safeway for just over 12 years, is "absolutely awesome," according to Store Manager Kelly Rurka. He comes in with a huge smile and has an "amazing positive attitude," she says. "He will say 'sure' to any job you ask him to do."

Sean has high standards for himself and his colleagues, and he is widely respected. His coworkers voted to nominate Sean as the store's candidate to contend for one of Safeway's spots in the 2010 Olympic Torch Relay. They notice that Sean always has a smile and a laugh to share, the ability to deliver even when being pulled in many different directions, the skills to give great customer service and the dedication to volunteer in a significant number of Safeway and community events.

Sean has also been an SOBC athlete for 15 years; cross-country skiing and swimming are his sports. He has competed in multiple SOBC summer and winter Provincial Games, and he qualified to swim for Team BC in the 2002 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games. Fresh off winning three medals – two gold, one bronze – in his cross-country skiing races at the 2011 Special Olympics BC Winter Sport Championships held in February and March, Sean is currently gearing up to get back into swimming form and preparing for the regional qualifier competitions where he will compete for the opportunity to advance to the next Provincial Games for summer sports.

Sean says that one of his favourite things about Special Olympics is how the year-round programs help him with "staying in shape." He adds that it feels pretty good to work for a company that supports Special Olympics as much as Safeway does.

Throughout April, the hardworking employees in Canada Safeway stores around the country are helping to raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics through the **Families Living with Disabilities campaign**, which supports Special Olympics BC and Easter Seals. For the Ocean Park Safeway staff, the campaign is all the more important to them because of what they know about Sean and his involvement with Special Olympics.

"It absolutely does mean a lot more to the team," Kelly says.

Initiated in 2009, the annual campaign aims to raise funds and awareness for families living with disabilities. Since its inception, the campaign has raised an incredible \$700,000 for Special Olympics programs across Canada. Last year, the fundraising raised more than \$400,000 in support of Special Olympics Canada, and of that, over \$120,000 was donated in BC.

From March 31 to May 1, **staff in stores across BC and all of Canada are asking customers to donate \$2 to the cause**. Staff also host fundraising events such as barbecues, bake sales and in-store raffles. And for every person who "likes" the Canada Safeway Facebook page this month, the Canada Safeway Foundation will donate \$1 to Special Olympics and Easter Seals.

Saturday, April 16, will be a day to celebrate Special Olympics BC and this much-appreciated campaign in Safeway stores around the province. Special Olympics BC athletes will be in stores in their respective areas to thank and celebrate with customers and Safeway employees, and local community

programs are planning plenty of fun activities. For information about what's happening in your community, contact SOBC Communications Manager Megan Grittani-Livingston (as below).

About Canada Safeway

Canada Safeway, a division of Safeway Inc., operates 224 stores across Western Canada. Safeway Inc. is a Fortune 100 company and one of the largest food and drug retailers in North America based on sales. Safeway Inc. operates 1,694 stores in the United States and Canada and had annual sales of \$41 billion in 2010. The company's common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol SWY.

About Special Olympics BC

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to providing individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to enrich their lives and celebrate personal achievement through positive sport experiences. In 55 communities around the province, we provide year-round training and competitive opportunities in 18 different sports to more than 3,800 athletes of all ages and abilities, thanks to the dedication of over 2,600 volunteers. For more information, please visit specialolympics.bc.ca.

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For more information and interview/photo opportunities, please contact:

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