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## **BC Lions welcome BCGEU to roster of 'Be More than a Bystander' partners**

VANCOUVER – The **BC Lions Football Club** along with Status of Women Canada, BC's Ministry of Children and Family Development, EVA BC and Encana Corporation are pleased to announce the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU) has lent its valuable support to the club's "Be More Than a Bystander" project.

**"Our partnership with EVA BC, the BC Lions and the Be More Than a Bystander program was a natural fit,"** said Stephanie Smith, BCGEU Treasurer and Chair of the BCGEU's Women's Committee. **"As a labour organization, it's important for the BCGEU to raise public awareness and encourage men of all ages to speak out against violence against women. We also see it as a way to honour the ongoing work of our members in community social service agencies who support and assist those impacted by violence."**

Launched last July, "Be More Than a Bystander" is a ground-breaking two-year project focused on breaking the silence surrounding violence against women and girls by providing tools, language and practical ideas about how to be more than a bystander, how to speak up on this important issue and how to communicate that violence and abuse is not acceptable.

**"Partnerships like the one announced today with the BCGEU are an important part of our community programs,"** said Lions president and CEO Dennis Skulsky. **"We commend the BCGEU for their shared vision of the Be More Than a Bystander initiative and we look forward to working together to spread the important message of this project."**

**"We are thrilled to welcome the BCGEU to the Be More Than a Bystander campaign,** said Tracy Porteous, executive director of the Ending Violence Association of BC. **"This partnership is a natural fit because so many BCGEU members are actively helping women and children impacted by violence every day through their jobs in provincial ministries, community social services and many other diverse sectors."**

**"The BC government is pleased to have the union on board working with us to promote a Be More Than a Bystander culture across BC,"** said Mary McNeil, Minister of Children and Family Development. **"Domestic violence is an issue we need to talk about openly and it's important that we work together**

**to promote healthy family relationships to prevent violence and abuse.”**

In addition to lending their names to radio and television public service announcements, a core group of BC Lions including **Travis Lulay, Shawn Gore, Ben Archibald, Dean Valli, J.R. LaRose** and **Angus Reid** visited numerous schools in communities across British Columbia this past offseason. Following extensive training sessions, players concentrated their presentations on students in grades 8-12 with a focus on encouraging young men to build positive, respectful relationships and speak out on violence against women.

**"As a founding partner of the Be More Than a Bystander program, Encana is glad to welcome the BC Government Employees Union as a program partner. BCGEU participation will ensure we will be able to reach out to more British Columbians with the program's important message,"** Richard Dunn, Vice-President of Regulatory and Government Relations, Encana Corporation.

For more information on the Ending Violence Association of BC please visit [endingviolence.org](http://endingviolence.org).

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### **About the BC Lions Football Club**

The BC Lions Football Club is British Columbia's most successful professional sports organization with six Grey Cup titles to their credit: **1964, 1985, 1994, 2000, 2006** and **2011**. Drawing on pride, decades of tradition, passion and a spirit of excellence, the BC Lions Football Club seeks to touch the lives of our community in a positive way and is dedicated to serving partners, sponsors, and fans.

Members of the media can access, download and print everything Lions at our FTP site <ftp://surrey.bclions.com> – username: **media** and password: **media**.

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