



For immediate release

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## **Girls Basketball Program a Slam Dunk in Saskatoon**

Shooting hoops and learning to dribble was the focus of nearly 140 girls in Saskatoon recently. The action took place during an after school basketball program held at seven Saskatoon community schools, where girls in Grades 3-5 had the opportunity to learn basic basketball skills and increase their sport participation.

“Each of the seven community schools had a great response to the program,” says Amy Shipley, Program Coordinator with Sask Sport Inc. “The coordinator at St. Michael Community School reported that it has been a very successful after school program. The combination of sport programming, transportation, and nutrition was a big draw that resulted in great participation at practices.”

Almost 20 girls participated at each of the seven schools, which held the program either once or twice a week for six to eight weeks. In addition to basketball lessons, healthy snacks and a ride home were also provided for the youth.

Shipley of Sask Sport Inc and Mike Tanton of For the Love Basketball Association worked together with community school coordinators and volunteer coaches to make the program possible. Funding support was provided by Sask Sport Inc.’s Aboriginal Community Sport Grant in collaboration with the Basketball Canada and Saskatchewan Basketball Association’s Steve Nash Youth Basketball program.

“This program is an outstanding example of what communities and schools across the province can accomplish with support from the Aboriginal Community Sport Grant,” says Shipley.

She encourages Saskatchewan communities to apply for the grant, which is designed to support the development and implementation of community sport programs with the goal of increasing sport participation among Aboriginal youth. The grant program is funded by Sport Canada Aboriginal Participation and the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation. More information can be found at [www.sasksport.sk.ca](http://www.sasksport.sk.ca).

To celebrate the success of the basketball program, a Jamboree will be held on Friday, December 11, 2009 at Tommy Douglas Collegiate from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. A non-competitive activity camp, the Jamboree will feature games and drills, as well as guest speakers presenting on healthy living topics for youth. In addition the girls will be receiving their certificates and program bags which include shoelaces donated by Saskatchewan in Motion.

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