

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 3, 2011

CONTACT: Sean Krausert (403) 609-1762

## ***Former Edmontonian Brings Her “Dirty Laundry” Home***

Former Edmontonian, Marilyn Avient, is poised to return to her hometown, and she is bringing her “Dirty Laundry”. *Dirty Laundry* is a theatrical stage production that takes dead aim at one of the greatest health issues affecting our world today.

According to the World Health Organization . . . this health issue is the leading cause of disability worldwide. Further . . . almost 5 times as many people suffer from it than AIDS; it is extremely deadly killing approximately 1 million people per year (i.e. one person every 40 seconds); and it costs the Canadian economy \$51 BILLION per year in health care and lost productivity. In Edmonton . . . 1 in 10 people are currently affected by it and 1 in 5 will personally experience it in their lifetime. What is it? Mental illness.

Despite being rampant, deadly, and incredibly costly . . . nobody wants to talk about it. That is where *Dirty Laundry* comes in. This one-woman theatrical production based upon a true story is designed to bring attention to mental health issues and get people talking with one another. On Friday February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, at 7:30 PM *Dirty Laundry* will be performed at the John L. Haar Theatre (Grant MacEwan University, Centre for the Arts & Communication, 10045-156 Street) in Edmonton.

*Dirty Laundry* is written and performed by native Edmontonian, Marilyn Avient. The play is based upon her true story, and depicts the triumph of the human spirit in one woman’s heroic lifelong journey into, through, and out of mental illness. The play’s goal is to entertain audiences while creating awareness of the realities of mental illness . . . the stigma, the burden on loved ones, the private suffering by the individual, and the real hope of recovery. “It is a no holds barred, gutsy performance that has impressed audiences wherever it has been staged,” says *Dirty Laundry* producer, Sean Krausert.

Over the last year, *Dirty Laundry* has performed to audiences in BC, Yukon, and Alberta. *Dirty Laundry* most recent performance was in Nanaimo at Vancouver Island University (“VIU”). Following the Nanaimo show last Fall, the Chair of the Psychology Dept. at VIU, Dr. Rachel Cooper wrote, “***What a BRILLIANT presentation!! I would give my psychology students credit for attending the performance. They will learn more about what it means to be human from Dirty Laundry than from the insights any introductory text could offer.***”

Tickets are \$30 at the door and \$25 in advance. Advance tickets as well as more information about *Dirty Laundry*, including testimonials and a video trailer, are available at – [www.dirtylaundrytheatre.ca](http://www.dirtylaundrytheatre.ca).

Both Marilyn Avient and Sean Krausert are available for interviews.

## Background Information

### Mental Health Statistics (& Sources)

#### **IMPACT:**

- Depression is ranked as the LEADING CAUSE OF DISABILITY WORLDWIDE, and affects about 120 million people at any given time.  
*World Health Organization*
- 20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime (depression and anxiety being the most common).  
*Health Canada, A Report on Mental Illness in Canada, 2002*
- 100% of Canadians are impacted by mental illness. If not experiencing it themselves, everybody directly knows someone who will experience a mental illness.  
*Health Canada, A Report on Mental Illness in Canada, 2002*
- 500,000 Canadians are absent from work every day due to psychiatric problems.  
*Insurance Journal 2003 as cited by the Gov't of Canada in The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada, 2006*
- 10.4% of Canadians have a mental illness at any given time.  
*Quick Facts: Mental Illness and Addiction in Canada, Mood Disorders Society of Canada, September 2007*
- Approximate 1 Million suicide deaths worldwide.  
<http://chartsbin.com/view/prm> (as of 2009)

#### **STIGMA:**

- Only 1/3 of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them.  
*Statistics Canada: Canadian Community Health Survey: Mental Health and Well-Being, 2003*
- Only 50% of Canadians would tell friends or coworkers they have a family member with mental illness (72% would discuss cancer in the family and 68% would discuss diabetes in the family).  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*
- Only 12% of Canadians would hire a lawyer who has a mental illness.  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*
- Only 49% of Canadians said they would socialize with a friend who has a serious mental illness.  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*
- 46% of Canadians think people use the term mental illness as an excuse for bad behaviour.  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*

#### **COST:**

- As of 2008, it is estimated that the total cost of mental illness to the Canadian economy in terms of health care and lost productivity is **\$51,000,000,000 (\$51 BILLION)**.  
*Dewa, CS et al, A new population-based measure of the burden of mental illness in Canada, Chronic Diseases in Canada, 2008*
- In Canada, while mental illnesses constitute more than 15% of the burden of disease in Canada, they only receive 5.5% of health care dollars.  
*Institute of Health Economics, How Much Should We Spend on Mental Health, September 2008*
- Mental Health is the number one cause of disability claims in Canada (accounting for nearly 30% of disability claims and 70% of the total costs).  
*Insurance Journal 2003 as cited by the Gov't of Canada in The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada, 2006*

### Global WE Initiatives Corp.

The company producing *Dirty Laundry*. The company's mission is to globally advocate for and create awareness of a "WE" worldview through a variety of means and media. A WE worldview is all-inclusive and focuses on social justice issues, specifically - the rights of all people, poverty alleviation, and breaking down artificial barriers that divide people. For more information – [www.globalwe.ca](http://www.globalwe.ca) .

Dirty Laundry Theatrical Production - For more information – [www.dirtylaundrytheatre.ca](http://www.dirtylaundrytheatre.ca) .