

January 15, 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Enjoy a teariffic time at the first-ever Victoria Tea Festival
A fundraiser for Camosun College Child Care Services
Sunday, March 11
Holiday Inn, 3020 Blanshard Street

In a city renowned for afternoon tea, Camosun College Child Care Services and presenting sponsor Silk Road Tea are taking the lead in hosting Victoria's first-ever Tea Festival, Sunday, March 11 at the Holiday Inn on Blanshard Street.

"The inaugural one-day event focuses on the tradition and trend of drinking tea," says organizer and Camosun Child Care Services Manager Lisa Stekelenburg. The event is a fundraiser for the College's Child Care Services.

The festival features a wide variety of teas from around the world, a silent and live auction and special presentations and tastings on all things tea including *Macchartistry*, *Cooking with Tea*, *The Old Tea Peddler* and *Elixir of Immortality* by local tea experts.

Jared and Miyu Nyberg of the JagaSilk tea company share their secrets on *Macchartistry or Maacha tea* during the 10am entry time. They'll discuss exactly what Maccha tea is, how to tell the difference between grades and how they've been working on making Maccha more accessible to the Victoria community. Maccha tea will be served with tasting advice and a question and answer opportunity.

Camille's Restaurant chef and owner David Mincey offers a presentation on *Cooking with Tea* during the 12:30pm entry time. Guests will discover some of the delicious ways tea can be used to enhance the flavour of food. Chef Mincey explores the art of cooking with tea and offers samples to tantalize the taste buds. Now in its 18th year of business, Camille's is recognized as one of Vancouver Island's finest dining destinations. By integrating social and environmentally responsible practices into his business strategy, Mincey has sustained a successful business by attracting customers with unique, delicious and locally produced ingredients. Mincey is also the president and co-founder of the Island Chef's Collaborative (ICC), a non-profit group of progressive chefs dedicated to promoting locally grown, high quality ingredients.

There are many wonderful stories of how tea spread to different cultures and became fashionable at various moments in history. At times, the rise in tea's popularity was linked to powerful figures such as royalty or influential individuals. For history buffs, Asian Art History professor Dr. Judith Patt offers a session on *The Old Tea Peddler* during the 3pm entry time. Guests will hear the fascinating tale of the former Obaku Zen monk Baisaô, (the "old tea peddler") and his friends among the 18th century Kyoto avant garde artists. They were instrumental in popularizing the drinking of Sencha, and in the creation of the Sencha Tea Ceremony. Sencha is a form of loose leaf green tea, which had recently been introduced from China into Japan. "Tea is considered the world's most popular beverage, after water," says Dr. Patt. "Currently tea is experiencing an increase in popularity throughout the western world."

Since ancient times tea has also been associated with beneficial properties. In Asian folklore, tea was known as the *Elixir of Immortality* because it was believed to increase longevity. In an intriguing exploration of the health benefits of tea, Silk Road co-owner Daniela Cubelic discusses the latest scientific research on tea including how it reduces the body's response to stress, assists in digestion and cardiovascular health, boosts the immune system, and slows the aging process during the 5pm entry time. "Each classification of tea offers different benefits," says Cubelic. "For example, green, oolong, black and white teas share some common properties, but also demonstrate unique elements. Where tea is grown, how it is processed and how you brew it also plays a role in impacting the health benefits it delivers." Silk Road is a local tea company that imports and blends organic, premium loose teas. Cubelic is a Tea Master who received her training with Chinese and Taiwanese Tea Masters and Herbalists. She is also an expert on the culture and history of tea, and has a passion for exploring innovative ways of enjoying tea.

The Victoria Tea Festival is sponsored and supported by: Silk Road, JagaSilk, Planet Organic, CUPE 2081, Serious Coffee, The UPS Store, Star Global, BC Restaurant and Food Association, Tourism Victoria, Oh Cha Tea House, Kissako Green Tea Café, Honestly Tea and Gifts, Cornelia Bean, and the Decorating Diva.

Tickets are \$45 each (including GST) and include tea sampling, tea education, tea experts, and tea sitting. Tickets are on sale now at Silk Road, Child Care Services Office, Kissako Green Tea Café, Oh Cha Tea House (Vancouver) and select Serious Coffee outlets. For all the details visit:

www.victoriateafestival.com

-30-

For media inquiries:

Lisa Stekelenburg
Manager, Child Care Services
Camosun College
Tel: 250-370-4889