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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release - May 7, 2008

MicroSkills Honours Mary Anne Chambers 2008 Recipient of the Margot Franssen Leadership Award

Toronto, ON – For the 11th consecutive year, MicroSkills is honouring Women Entrepreneurs, Women Leaders, Youth, and Corporate Spirit. Its 11th Annual Gala Celebration and Awards Banquet will be held on Thursday, May 22, 2008, 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Pearson Convention Centre, 2638 Steeles Avenue East (Airport Rd. & Steeles) in Brampton.

A highlight of the event will be the presentation of the 3rd **Margot Franssen Leadership Award** to Mary Anne Chambers. Ms. Chambers is being recognized for her extensive work with both communities and governments to improve access and inclusion for women and immigrants.

Born in Jamaica, Ms. Chambers immigrated to Canada in 1976. After a successful career in business – she retired as a Senior Vice-President of Scotia Bank in December 2002 – Ms. Chambers' political career began with her election as MPP for Scarborough East. She was appointed to the Executive Council of the Government of Ontario in 2003. As Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities, she was responsible for implementing many investments in post-secondary education that would create opportunities for higher education for youth from low-income families. She was appointed Minister of Children and Youth Services in June, 2005. In that position, Ms. Chambers was credited by Premier McGuinty as being the driving force behind the Ontario government's Youth Opportunities Strategy and the Ontario Child Benefit. Throughout her career, Ms. Chambers has been passionately concerned with social responsibility, equality of opportunity, education, healthcare, and the rights of women and minorities. She retired from public life in July, 2007.

"We are honoured," says Kay Blair, Executive Director of MicroSkills, "to recognize a woman with such leadership capability who has given so much of herself to improving the lives of and creating opportunities for youth, women, and girls."

Created in honour of Margot Franssen, well-known entrepreneur and social activist, the **Margot Franssen Leadership Award** recognizes a woman who combines outstanding leadership in the private or public sector with a passionate commitment to the advancement of women and girls. Under Ms. Franssen's leadership, The Body Shop Canada raised over \$1.3 million for violence prevention programs between 1980 and 2004. It was also recognized for its ethical practices. Ms. Franssen's achievements as both businesswoman and social activist have earned her many awards, including the Order of Canada, and the YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in 2004. Ms. Franssen is currently Co-President of the Canadian Women's Foundation.

The award will be presented at MicroSkills Annual Gala Celebration on Thursday, May 22nd, 2008, 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Pearson Convention Centre, 2638 Steeles Ave. East (Airport Rd. & Steeles Ave.), Brampton.

About Community MicroSkills Development Centre:

MicroSkills is a multicultural, non-profit, community based organization, providing settlement, training, employment and self employment services in North Etobicoke. For over twenty years, MicroSkills has empowered women, youth and newcomers to build better lives and careers. With an innovative and holistic approach unique in its sector, MicroSkills trains, guides and mentors over 20,000 adults and youth annually – one life at a time.

Proud sponsors of the MicroSkills Gala include:

The Co-operators, Toronto Hydro Electric System, Alterna Savings, Enbridge Gas Distribution, Margot Franssen, Credit Union Central of Ontario, SYSCO Food Services of Toronto, Woodbine Entertainment Group, Certified General Accountants, Scotia Bank and OMNI Television.

For further information:

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