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For Immediate Release

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Variety BC launch *Variety Kids Can* campaign for children with special needs
Milan & Maureen Ilich Family Foundation contribute \$1 million; challenge others

(Vancouver, BC) \$1 million donated to Variety - the Children's Charity by the Milan & Maureen Ilich Family Foundation at the Show of Hearts telethon in February will go towards the new *Variety Kids Can* campaign. The announcement was made by Rick Ilich on Tuesday at the Terminal City Club, where Variety BC launched the fundraising initiative.

"The Milan & Maureen Ilich Family Foundation felt that this was the right year to make a very special gift for kids with special needs and their families," said Ilich. "We invite other organizations and individuals to join us today in supporting Variety, so they can always be there to help kids be kids."

The campaign – which thanks to the Ilich family made a giant first day leap towards its \$2.5 million fundraising goal – is designed to attract more funding towards Variety BC's core grant areas, as well as provide new opportunities to expand on the way the charity can help the kids and families it serves.

"*Variety Kids Can* is a celebration of the remarkable achievements made every day by the kids we help, thanks to the generosity of our donors," said Variety BC CEO, Kristy Gill. "We want our supporters to know that when they give, it means kids all across the province can learn and connect, move with freedom, be mentally well – and thrive."

Individuals and organizations are invited to join Variety online and use the hashtags #Igive and #VarietyKidsCan to share the reasons they donate as well as share inspirational stories of kids overcoming obstacles. Funds raised by *Variety Kids Can* will go towards Variety BC's five granting pillars, comprised of Mobility, Specialized Therapies, Mental Wellness, Educational Programs and Bursaries for Learning Disabilities, and Lifesaving Medical Equipment and Supplies.

"Variety is one of the only charities that will fund the kind of specialized therapy we needed for our child," said Natasha Golinsky, whose daughter, Kalenna, has Childhood Apraxia of Speech – a condition that kept her completely non-verbal until she was six years old. Thanks to Variety, Kalenna has been able to see a speech therapist twice a week, and she has made more progress in the last year, than in the six prior. This week she spoke her first five word sentence. We're so grateful."

Donations to the *Variety Kids Can* campaign can be made at variety.bc.ca or by calling 1-800-381-2040.



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About Variety - the Children's Charity:

Variety - the Children's Charity steps in where health care ends, providing direct help to children with special needs in BC and the Yukon. For over 50 years Variety has ensured children have the support to reach their potential.

Together, we can be there when a family needs us the most.

Since 2010 Variety has distributed more than \$25 million in funding to families and organizations in communities all across the province. With your help, we can raise even more!

For more information on how you can support Variety - the Children's Charity, visit variety.bc.ca or call 604.320.0505.

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