



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 13, 2017

**ALTERNA SAVINGS CRACKUP COMEDY FESTIVAL WARMED HEARTS THIS WEEKEND**

[Ottawa, ON] – The comedy festival, Alterna Savings Crackup had a hot weekend despite Ottawa’s cold and snowy conditions. Volunteers, celebrities and comedians all turned out to support local Mental Health agencies during the first weekend of the festival, running February 7 -18.

On Saturday, just like last year, hundreds turned out to attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the most snowmen built in one hour, including Mayor Jim Watson. Spirits were high and enthusiasm was evident despite the icy conditions slowing things down at the Snowmania Challenge. The Alterna team had hoped to break their own record; but regardless, the crowd was quite proud of the results. Despite the hard frozen snow, they managed to chip out enough icy snow blocks to produce 1057 Inukshuk style snowmen!

If that show of support wasn’t heartwarming enough, then Sunday night’s Gala proved to be hot indeed. Comedians, celebrities and VIP’s braved a heavy snow storm to turn out for the Alterna Savings @crackup Comedy Gala and pay tribute to Canada’s beloved comedy legend, John Candy, including the Candy children. Jennifer and Chris Candy traveled from LA to receive the honor of their father’s ‘Canadian Comedy Legend Award’, and to hear that February 12 was declared as John Candy Day in Ottawa by Mayor Jim Watson.

The Gala was honored when Madam Margaret Trudeau joined comedians like Patrick McKenna and Ron James on stage, while Madam Sophie Gregoire-Trudeau joined comedians Mary Walsh and Andrea Martin on a video feed to share heartfelt stories, sentiments and laughter.

Alterna’s CEO, Rob Paterson, explained why sponsoring Crackup was so important. “It was an opportunity to mobilize and engage our teams in support of a cause that frankly - for too long - has gone under-supported and recognized as a health crisis in this country. If we could help bring greater access to mental health services, and be a small part of an even wider movement to de-stigmatize it in our society, then we’re up for the challenge.”

Paterson summed it up nicely when he said “Fighting back against something so dark and difficult with the power of laughter is truly genius...and in my mind is also truly Canadian.



Taking place February 7 to February 18, 2017, the complete Canada 150 line-up of comedy events and shows includes some of the biggest names in Canadian comedy such as Ron James, Jeremy Hotz, Cathy Jones, Jonny Harris, and Big Daddy Tazz!

Organized by @crackup, these events are raising money for Mental Health agencies in Ottawa and helping to end stigma associated with Mental Health.

Visit [crackup.ca](http://crackup.ca) to check out the line-up!

### **About Alterna Savings Crackup**

Alterna Savings Crackup has been presenting comedy for a cause shows for the past 13 years in Ottawa. Formerly named, Cracking-up the Capital, it began as a one-night comedy show and has grown into a two week-long festival that takes place during Winterlude.

With the help of our sponsors, community partners, media partners, and our supporters, Alterna Savings Crackup has raised over \$190, 000 in support of local mental health initiatives.

With the support of the United Way Ottawa, this year's festival will benefit Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre, Causeway, the Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre, Do It for Daron (DIFD) at The Royal, Partners for Mental Health, and the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health.

With the assistance of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, this year the festival is able to present a unique show for the people who work tirelessly to support and to destigmatize mental health in our community.

- 30 -

**Link to photos here:** <https://www.shaughnessyphotography.com/alterna-crackup.html>  
(Copyright 2017. Randy Shaughnessy Photography. All Rights Reserved – please contact for permissio.)

### **Media inquiries:**

Jackie Duhard  
Director, Communications and Public Relations, Alterna Savings Crackup  
[jackie@crackup.ca](mailto:jackie@crackup.ca)

Alison Boughey –Communications Manager- Alterna Savings  
P: 613-560-0150 ext.6988  
E: [alison.boughey@alterna.ca](mailto:alison.boughey@alterna.ca)