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Founder: Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova

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For Immediate Release

## Remembering Canada's Early Humanitarian Face Lotta Hitschmanova Honoured in Museum of Civilization's New 'Personalities Hall'

*Ottawa/Gatineau, June 28, 2007.* In the company of the Prime Ministers, writers, and industrialists who shaped Canadian history, is an unlikely character: a young Czech woman whose parents were in a World War II concentration camp, who found refuge in Canada and made it her lifelong mission to help those in need around the world.

Lotta Hitschmanova, along with 26 other famous Canadians, is featured in **Face to Face: The Canadian Personalities Hall**, a new permanent exhibit of the Canadian Museum of Civilization that opens Saturday June 30. The exhibit brings visitors face to face with the fascinating people whose decisions, actions and accomplishments shaped Canada.

Everything about Lotta was intriguing: her name, her trademark military uniform, and her story. In 1945, she established the Unitarian Service Committee (USC), a small group of humanitarian aid workers sending supplies to war-torn Europe. She became a venerated symbol of how one person can make a difference in the lives of many, making "56 Sparks Street" a household name through her numerous radio and television ads.

"In many ways, Lotta represents Canada's coming of age on the international scene," says Susan Walsh, USC Canada's Executive Director. "Lotta spoke passionately about human dignity, and about the hopes and values that connect humanity across borders. Today, her words ring true more than ever, as we tackle the problems of global poverty and injustice, conflict, and climate change."

USC Canada works in community-based agriculture with partner organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and is involved in public education and policy work in Canada, and globally. "We've learned over the years that it isn't enough to support communities to carry out development programs," says Walsh. "It's just as important to have active global citizens who can change the structures and policies that keep people poor."

Walsh adds that USC's work is still premised on recognizing the potential in every human being, and helping them achieve that potential with their own knowledge, resources and creativity. "That was Lotta's conviction more than 60 years ago, and it's even more relevant today," she says.

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For more information about Face to Face, or an interview with Susan Walsh:

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**Download high-resolution images of Lotta at: [http://usc-canada.org/?page\\_id=46](http://usc-canada.org/?page_id=46)**

## **LOTTA HITSCHMANOVA – Her Own Words**

“You have come to help [them], and you want to help altruistically, not for reasons of personal gain. In listening there must be no preconceived ideas, no prejudices as to religion or colour or origins – for it must be your conviction that mankind is one, made up of many faces. You must love people, and have the sensitivity to be interested in their problems; to be able to settle down and listen, for hours if necessary, in order to learn all you can about their problems before you start offering advice and help.”

(from “The Art of Giving Aid”, a lecture at Brock University, 1973)

## **ABOUT USC CANADA**

USC Canada was founded in 1945 by Lotta Hitschmanova as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada.

USC promotes vibrant family farms, strong rural communities and healthy ecosystems around the world. With engaged Canadians and partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we support programs, training, and policies that strengthen biodiversity, food sovereignty, and the rights of those at the heart of resilient food systems -- women, indigenous peoples, and small-scale farmers.

For more information visit [www.usc-canada.org](http://www.usc-canada.org)

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## **ABOUT “FACE TO FACE”**

**Face to Face: The Canadian Personalities Hall** is the Canadian Museum of Civilization’s newest permanent gallery. It explores the Canada’s rich history through the fascinating lives and accomplishments of 27 important individuals, using artifacts, recordings, photographs and first-hand accounts that create intimate sketches that put a human face on Canadian history.

Face to Face opens to the public Saturday June 30, 2007.

For more information visit [www.civilization.ca/facetoface](http://www.civilization.ca/facetoface)

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