

News Release

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ECCDC PILOT PROJECT WILL BRING NIAGARA CHILDREN & SENIORS TOGETHER

The Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) will launch a pilot project aimed at making it easier for child care centres and seniors homes to offer intergenerational programming. This project is made possible by a \$25,000 grant from the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP). The New Horizons for Seniors Program is a federal program that supports projects led or inspired by seniors who make a difference in the lives of others and in their communities. Through the NHSP, the Government of Canada encourages seniors to share their knowledge, skills and experiences to the benefit of others.

The ECCDC is pleased to be working with representatives from Niagara's early learning and child care community and local seniors programs to pilot the project, which is entitled *Building Strong Community Connections in Niagara through Seniors and Children*. This project will link seniors in seniors residences to children enrolled in child care programs and family support programs so that seniors may share their knowledge, skills and experiences with the younger generation. The project's goals include:

- promoting improved life satisfaction and a sense of purpose and connectedness in the community for seniors;
- helping young children develop meaningful relationships, an image of aging that is healthy and active, and an opportunity to learn about the history of Niagara;
- making it easier for child care programs and seniors residents to work together; and
- the creation of a toolkit to support community agencies in the development of meaningful intergenerational programs.

A community collaborative planning committee will offer recommendations and advice and assist the ECCDC in piloting the intergenerational project and tools. The ECCDC is pleased to have the involvement of the following agencies on the planning committee and in piloting the project and tools: A Child's World Family Child Care Services, the Ontario Early Years Centre-Niagara Falls, Niagara Nursery School, Rosalind Blauer, Fort Erie Regional Child Care, Chartwell Niagara, Lookout Ridge Senior Residence, Niagara Region Seniors Services – Gilmore Lodge, and the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara.

The toolkit being developed will include a strategy handbook for designing effective intergenerational programs, workshop outlines to help prepare seniors and children for the excitement of visits, a backpack of interactive activities that children may share during their visits, and an information pack of materials to help seniors spark conversation.

Lorrey Ariel Bonilla, Interim Executive Director is excited to begin piloting the innovative program; *"The Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) is deeply grateful to the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program for providing funding to design and pilot a project that will promote improved life satisfaction and a sense of purpose and connectedness for seniors in our community. We believe the project will support young children in developing meaningful relationships and will provide opportunities for them to learn about the rich culture and history of Niagara."*

Bill Irwin from the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara shares her enthusiasm *"Kiwanis, in their dedication to changing the world one child and one community at a time, looks forward to supporting a project aimed at connecting seniors with young children so they may learn from one another and benefit from the relationships that will be formed."*



This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada.



Kim Cole, Executive Director of A Child's World is also pleased to be part of the project and sees their experience in working with Lookout Ridge and Bella Senior Care as an asset to the project. *"The children and seniors involved with our current intergenerational programming benefit from the relationships and friendships that develop between them. The delight that is seen in the eyes of both the children and seniors is one that I wish everyone could experience."*

For further information about the Early Childhood Community Development Centre or the Intergenerational Pilot Project, please contact Lorrey Ariel Bonilla, Interim Executive Director at 905.646.7311, ext. 321 or larial@eccdc.org.

An article highlighting the funding announcement posted within the St. Catharines Standard on Tuesday August 26, 2014 may be accessed at: http://www.wellandtribune.ca/2014/08/26/bridging-the-generation-gap?utm_source=addThis&utm_medium=addthis_button_email&utm_campaign=Bridging+the+generation+gap+%7C+St.+Catharines+Standard#.U_zPm1160Rc.email



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