



early childhood community development centre

For Immediate Release: November 17, 2017

Celebrating the Stars of Niagara's Early Learning and Child Care Community
Local Early Learning & Child Care Professionals Honoured in Special Ceremony

St. Catharines: Fifty Early Learning Professionals, volunteers and students received recognition last evening at the 21st Annual Niagara Early Learning and Child Care Awards of Excellence celebration at the Holiday Inn & Suites in St. Catharines Conference Centre. The event was coordinated by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC).

There were approximately 330 guests in attendance at the Oscars style gala, sponsored by **Louise Kool & Galt**, one of Canada's leading suppliers of classroom resources and equipment. Nine local businesses also supported the event, including: **Gold Level Sponsors YMCA of Niagara and the St. Catharines Standard; Silver Level Sponsors A Child's World Family Child Care Services of Niagara, Minuteman Press, and PenFinancial Credit Union; and Bronze Level Sponsors Brock University Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Degree Program and Mountainview Homes.** This year's special **Niagara Walk of Fame Sponsor** was **Pathstone Mental Health.** Many other businesses contributed items for the silent auction fundraiser.

The ECCDC was delighted to have Tami Jeanneret of 105.7 EZ Rock emcee the event. We would like to extend gratitude to 105.7 EZ Rock for sponsoring her attendance. The entertainment for the evening was provided by **The Fox Duo and Broadway Lights Dance Studio.**

The ECCDC was pleased to premiere a video entitled ***How Does Learning Happen in Niagara?*** featuring a selection of early learning programs from across the region. This video was produced in collaboration with Niagara College's film department students and professor Bill Boehlen.

Various longstanding awards were presented, including; **The Contributor Award for Volunteers and Colleagues.** This year's award winners included: Jessica Beauregard, Tina Bellamy, Tom Burse, Megan Calcott, Sharon Clarke, Holley D'Orazio, Gabriella Duarte, Debra Harwood, Carrie Huckle, Ken Ingram, Madison Kempf, Huguette Leduc, Debbie Lee, Allysa McLean, Jennifer Phillips, Deborah Ryan, Genesta Ryan, Paul Smagata, Tammy Stanley, Shyamala Subakaran, Melissa Tisi, Vilma Tortolero, and Halina Tuchowski. **The Brock Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Outstanding Student Award** was proudly presented to Stephanie Mader. Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care was the proud recipient of the **Eco-Friendly Child Care Practices Award**, while Natalie Ventresca was honoured through the **Emergent Literacy Award.** **The Kindergarten Team Award** was presented to Katie Bender, Patricia Bukator, Jessica Fraser and Lina Muraca for their outstanding contributions, and Helene Randle was honoured through the **Licensed Child Care Administrator Award.** **The Commitment to Continuous Professional Learning Award** was presented to Melissa Carroll for all of her meaningful contributions. Lori Bailey, Susie Johnson and Brittany Walsh were recognized in the **Family Support Program Practitioner Award** category, and the **Quality Child Care Niagara Exceptional Program Award** recognized Grimsby Co-operative Preschool for their outstanding contributions. North End Co-operative Preschool was honoured in the **Nurturing Children's Connection to Nature** category, and **The Early Childhood Educator Professionalism Award** was presented to Jacqueline Caron, Amy Cassibo, Cathy Edkins, Kristin Foschini, Debbie Grundy, Hayley Lyon, Brittany Lynds, Nicole Rasmussen, Susanne Robitaille, Kathleen Scott, Amy Shute, Emily Urquhart and Stephanie Woodcock for their meaningful contributions.

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The ECCDC is a charitable organization inspiring excellence in early learning and child care through thought leadership, cutting edge training, innovative resources and coaching services highlighting best practices and emerging trends. In the more than 20 years since its creation by local volunteers, the ECCDC has become Canada's leading early learning training, resource and referral organization.