



June 2018: For immediate release

“Changing the world child by child”

Roots of Empathy Baby Celebration

This year has been an incredible one for the internationally recognized program, Roots of Empathy. From a video feature on BBC World Hacks with over 18 million views to the founder and president Mary Gordon receiving the Governor General’s Innovation Award which recognizes Canadian individuals, teams and organizations for their outstanding accomplishments, it’s safe to say Root of Empathy is making a tremendous impact and ***“changing the world child by child.”***

This year’s annual Roots of Empathy Baby Celebration will be honouring the world’s youngest teachers: the Roots of Empathy babies. For the past 10 months, approximately 1,500 children across the Region in the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the District School Board of Niagara, Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir, and Ontario Early Years Centres have had the opportunity to show and be shown empathy through the lens of the Roots of Empathy program. The event will take place on Friday June 15, 2018 at Niagara Catholic District School Board office at 427 Rice Road, Welland. The doors will open at 9:45 a.m. with the celebration ending at 11:30 a.m. There will be approximately 90 guests in attendance.

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based program that takes place in classrooms that range from Kindergarten to grade 8. The program promotes empathy and kindness through classroom and parent visits involving a family, baby, instructor and teacher with a classroom filled with kind and curious children. Through research conducted across three continents since the year 2000, Roots of Empathy’s impact has proven to increase pro-social behaviour and decrease bullying which has also reduced the number of children fighting by approximately 50 percent.

With Roots of Empathy in eleven countries, across three continents and in four different languages, founder and president Mary Gordon has traveled the world touching the hearts of so many and sharing wisdom with those that share a similar mission and vision of building “caring and peaceful societies.”

The Roots of Empathy Baby Celebration helps emphasize the impact of the program by bringing attention to the incredible collaboration of children and families, instructors and teachers, principals and superintendents as well as Student Achievement leaders and Mental Health Leads. All these individuals work together to ensure the delivery of seamless and impactful programs within Niagara’s schools and Early Learning Programs.

The celebration will include Guest speakers such as: John Crocco, Director of Educator for Niagara Catholic District School Board; Susie Palumbo, Student Achievement leader for District School Board of Niagara; and three representatives from Alexander Kuska Elementary School, including Carlo Arghittu, Principal; Michael Fishleigh, classroom teacher; and Karen Belcastro, Child and Youth Worker. In addition, a representative from the Roots of Empathy International office will be in attendance; Sheree Wells, Ontario Provincial Manager.

Early Childhood Community Development Centre is pleased to be the Coordinating Agency for Roots of Empathy in Niagara. The ECCDC is an independent charitable organization dedicated to providing Niagara’s early learning and care program providers with affordable access to the specialized learning resources, training and supports they need to deliver high quality care. Among the ECCDC’s services are the operation of a lending library of classroom resources and learning equipment, a workroom for educators to research and develop new learning activities for the children in their care, and professional development programming for both centre and home based child care providers. The ECCDC’s services are available to all Niagara ECEs and teachers, as well as others involved in the care and education of children.

For further information, please contact Lorrey Arial Bonilla at 905.646.7311 ext.321 or larial@eccdc.org.