



early childhood community development centre



September 13, 2013

For Immediate Release

KIWANIS PROJECT WILL ENHANCE SCIENCE EDUCATION IN CHILD CARE CENTRES

Thanks to a two-year, \$150,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario, the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara and the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) will provide science and technology learning kits to approximately 175 licensed child care programs in Niagara over the next two years. The two organizations have undertaken similar projects together; most recently a project which provided Niagara's licensed child care programs with numeracy based educational materials. In addition to receiving the play based learning kit, the project will include a training component for the Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) who will use the new science resources in their child care programs.

Thorold MPP Cindy Forster is pleased to see the project has received funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation. "I commend the ECCDC and Kiwanis Clubs and its volunteers in Niagara for this collaborative project that will see some 6,000 young people learn about science and technology with these play based learning kits in child care centres across Niagara. It is an investment in our children that can only yield positive results down the road."

The first phase of the project will involve the selection of learning materials to be included in the kits. Educational resource supplier Louise Kool & Galt will make these items available at greatly discounted rates and retired educators from the Kiwanis Clubs will work with representatives from the ECCDC, Niagara Child Care Sector Executive, and Quality Child Care Niagara Advisory Committee to identify appropriate resources to include and how to link the materials to the goals and principles outlined in the Ministry of Education's *Ontario Early Years Framework: Early Learning for Every Child Today* and to the College of Early Childhood Educators' *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*. Kiwanis volunteers will assist with compiling, storing, and delivering the kits.

The ECCDC will design and deliver 24 training sessions encompassing some 1,000 Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working within licensed child care centres across Niagara. At the training sessions, each centre will receive one of the new play based science and technology learning kits as well as a comprehensive training booklet with strategies on implementing the kit in their early years environments. Each kit will contain learning materials to promote young children's awareness and understanding of science concepts and processes such as cause and effect, observation, prediction, recording results, making predictions, asking questions, and drawing conclusions. Kiwanis volunteers will assist with setting up and organizing the training sessions.

"We're very excited to be working with the ECCDC on another project which meets the specific resource and training needs of Niagara's early learning and child care community," says Bill Irwin of the St. Catharines Kiwanis Club. "In 2012, the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara conducted a survey of local child care programs" says Lorrey Arial-Bonilla, Interim Executive Director of the ECCDC, a local charitable organization that offers educators affordable access to resources, training, and other supports. "Overwhelmingly, local child care programs ranked play based learning resources and professional development pertaining to science and technology at the top of their wish lists." Darlene Edgar, Director of Children's Services with Niagara Region and ECCDC's primary funder is very supportive of the upcoming project; "The willingness and ability of all sectors of the community to collaborate with one another to support children's early learning is one of the reasons why Niagara is such a great place to raise a family. It's wonderful to see this kind of commitment to the success of our youngest citizens."

-30-

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