



early childhood community development centre

Celebrating 20 years of helping early learning and care programs be successful, innovative and professional

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LOCAL EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS HONOURED IN SPECIAL CEREMONY

St. Catharines: Over 60 Registered Early Childhood Educators, program staff, volunteers, full day early learning programs and students received recognition last evening at a special awards ceremony at the Holiday Inn & Suites in St. Catharines. The ceremony was part of the Niagara Early Learning and Child Care Awards of Excellence Celebration and was coordinated by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC) with longstanding supporter Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO).

There were 315 people in attendance at the gala, which was sponsored by Louise Kool & Galt, one of Canada's leading suppliers of classroom equipment. Ten area businesses also supported the event including: Sun Media, A Child's World Family Child Care Services of Niagara, PenFinancial Credit Union, Minuteman Press, Westpier Marine & Industrial Supply, Meridian Credit Union, Henderson's Pharmacy, Future Access Inc., Skycomp Solutions Inc., Custom Cake Boutique, and the University of Guelph-Humber - Early Childhood Degree Completion Program. Dozens of other businesses contributed items for the silent auction fundraiser.

The ECCDC was thrilled to have Darlene Edgar, Director of Children's Services, Niagara Region, Vice President of the College of Early Childhood Educators and Chair of Early Years Niagara Planning Council along with Dr. Mary Louise Vanderlee, Professor of Brock University's Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Program and Early Years Niagara Community Champion emcee the event. The ECCDC was also very pleased to have Eduarda Sousa, Executive Director with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario and Lois Mahon, President of the College of Early Childhood Educators join the event and bring greetings.

In addition to recognizing the outstanding dedication and commitment of Niagara's early learning and child care community, the 20th anniversary of the opening of the ECCDC was celebrated, along with the 10th anniversary of Quality Child Care Niagara, a local training initiative for Niagara's licensed child care programs.

The ECCDC was very pleased to include four new award categories at this year's ceremony; **Family Support Program Practitioner Award**, **Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Team Award**, **Licensed Child Care Centre Administrators Award**, and **Quality Child Care Niagara Exceptional Program Award**. The Family Support Program Practitioner Award recognizes significant contributions to Niagara's Ontario Early Years Centres and Family Support Programs. Martha Benjumea, Donna Dalgleish, Susan Dayboll, Amanda Iannazzo, Bonnie Krause, Marlene Ruff-Recasens, Carrie Szacas, Carol Vormittag, and Kelly Wilcox were all recognized in this category. The Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Team Award honours outstanding teams who exemplify the six fundamental principles of the Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program in their daily work with children, families, and other educators. The following Full Day Teams from Senator Gibson School were recognized; Jenn Schneider and Shari Thompson, Sara Bosnic, Melissa Futino and



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Nicole Bannister, Heather Gorham-Nowell, Rachel Bruegeman, Colleen Bogucki, Kelli Nero and Teresa Smelle and Tracey Orlando and Jackie Harper. The following Full Day Early Learning Teams were also recognized from Crystal Beach Public School; Heather Bauer and Kim Higgins as well as Stephanie Prescott and Lisa Raseta.

Niagara Child Care Sector Executive Committee sponsored a new award recognizing Licensed Child Care Administrators who demonstrate a high level of skill and commitment in their administrative role as outlined by the *Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators*. Crystal Randall of Grapeview Daycare was honoured in this award category. Niagara Nursery School and Daycare was the proud recipient of the **Quality Child Care Niagara (QCCN) Exceptional Program Award** for exemplifying the QCCN philosophy both within its program and in the broader community. Brock University was excited to present the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Outstanding Student Award to Jennifer Witt for demonstrating the standards of practice and ethics of care in both academic pursuits and contributions to the early childhood community.

Various longstanding awards were also presented during the evening, including the **Early Learning and Child Care Practitioner Professionalism Awards**, which recognize Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) who exemplify the College of Early Childhood Educators Standards of Practice in their day-to-day work with families and children. Individuals recognized in this category include; Alicia Akerley, Lisa Baumgartner, Karen Beckett, Christine Cameron, Christina Clark, Amy Cools, Jennifer Dolan, Pauline Graham, Christine Gray Johnston, Joanne Janzen, Amanda Laurin, Sarah Luchkanyn, Laura MacLeod, Roxanne Patterson, Joscelene Perry, Amanda Pole, Sarah Riganelli, Krista Rogers, Melissa Surman, Krista Thompson, Andrea Vanderkooi, Stefanie Viscek, Sandra Winfield. **The Contributor Award for Volunteers and Colleagues recognizing individuals who make outstanding contributions** to Niagara's early learning and child care programs in a volunteer or support role honoured Jeannine Allan, Ellen Boneberger, Sharon Boyd, Debbie Cunningham, Madhini Elangovan, Natalie Galajda, Julie Gledhill, Devon Keddy, Victor Maturi, Guerline Nazaire-Paul, Joe Sheldon, Shivani Singh, Amryll Strachan, and Lynn Van Dyke. Brittany Pansino was recognized in the **Margaret Hamilton Graduating Student Award**, presented by the Niagara College Early Childhood Education Program to a student who has excelled in both academics and field placements and will make excellent contributions to the child care community. Grapeview Daycare was the proud recipient of the **Eco Friendly Child Care Practices Award**, while Crystal Solazzo and Lori Brady, RECEs who demonstrate exceptional emergent literacy skills throughout the day, were honoured through the **Emergent Literacy Award**.

Lastly, Quality Child Care Niagara honoured the following local licensed child care programs for successfully implementing Phase One and Phase Two of the Quality Child Care Niagara Program; YMCA Child Care – Crossroads, YMCA Child Care - St. Michael, YMCA Child Care - College Street, YMCA – Grapeview, A Child's World Child Care – Woodlawn (Phases 1 & 2), The Chestnut Tree Preschool, La Boîte à Soleil - Nouvel Horizon (Phases 1 & 2), and Kids First Child Care Centre 3 (Boys & Girls Club, Fort Erie).

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