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***For Immediate Release***

**Niagara Celebrates Excellence in Early Learning at the 2026 Appreciation and Recognition Gala**

Niagara Falls, ON – On Thursday November 26, 2026, Niagara's early years and child care community will unite for an inspiring evening of celebration at the 2026 Niagara Early Learning and Child Care Appreciation and Recognition Gala. From 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. at The Americana Conference Centre, more than **500 guests** will gather to honour the exceptional early childhood educators, students, volunteers, and support staff whose dedication strengthens the lives of children and families across Niagara.

Coordinated annually by longstanding local charity, **Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC)**, this signature event shines a spotlight on the professionalism, passion, and unwavering commitment of those who elevate Niagara's early years sector. It also celebrates the partnerships and collaborative relationships that enrich the community and create meaningful opportunities for children and families. Lorrey Arial Bonilla, Executive Director of the ECCDC, emphasizes the importance of recognizing these vital contributors: "We are so grateful for the opportunity to bring Niagara's early years and child care sector together each year to recognize and celebrate the dedication and commitment of so many individuals and organizations who work tirelessly each day to create positive, enriching experiences that help children learn, grow, and thrive. The ECCDC extends deepest gratitude to our generous business sponsors and community partners who contribute to the event to honour the outstanding achievements of our early years community."

Guests will be welcomed by event host **Aiko Iwashita of Dream 105.7**, this year's Media Sponsor, and treated to live entertainment from Niagara-based musician **Ranger**, adding a vibrant local touch to the celebration. The ECCDC gratefully acknowledges the generous support of **Louise Kool and Galt**, the gala's primary event sponsor, along with numerous community-minded partners including the YMCA of Niagara, Little One's Lunches, Howell's Farm, Mountainview Building Group, A Child's World Family Child Care Services, CIBC, District School Board of Niagara, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Commercial Cleaning Services, Skycomp Solutions, and Steinbachs & Chapelle Professional Corporation.

A highlight of the evening will be the presentation of recognition awards by community partners committed to strengthening early learning and child care across Niagara. Participating organizations include Niagara Region Children's Services, Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO), Brock University, Children's Learning Garden, the College of Early Childhood Educators, Fort Erie Aboriginal Head Start, Métis Nation of Ontario, Niagara College, Pathstone Mental Health, Wee Watch Home Child Care, and many others. The ECCDC is pleased to have Satinder Klair, Director of Niagara Region Children's Services joining to bring greetings on behalf of Niagara Region; ECCDC's primary funder.

The Niagara Early Learning and Child Care Appreciation and Recognition Gala stands as a tribute to the professionals whose knowledge, compassion, and dedication help children thrive, empower families, and build a stronger Niagara.

*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. The ECCDC exists so that early learning professionals are supported in offering exceptional opportunities for children to grow, learn and develop. In the more than 30 years since its creation by local volunteers, the ECCDC has become a leading early learning training, resource, and referral organization.*

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

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