

February 10, 2026

**For Immediate Release**

## **Kiwanis Club Sponsorship Offers Innovative Literacy Resources for Licensed Child Care Centres in Niagara**

The Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC), a registered charity, is thrilled to accept a generous \$16,000 donation from the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara. This funding will support the design and development of early literacy resources for local licensed child care programs.

Literacy is a foundational skill that begins developing at birth. Research shows that hands-on storytelling props, such as story sacks, support early literacy by encouraging children who are not yet reading to verbally tell, act out, and engage with stories. These resources also support visual learners with comprehension and offers educators a unique way to capture the children's attention. The story sacks will strengthen listening skills and will introduce early numeracy concepts such as prediction and sequencing. These unique resources will be thoughtfully curated by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre (ECCDC), a charity that has provided resources, professional learning, and organizational support to early learning programs within Niagara for 32 years.

As part of this initiative, licensed child care programs will have the opportunity to have two educators join a unique train-the-trainer professional learning workshop delivered by the ECCDC training team, highlighting Ontario's Early Learning Framework, *How Does Learning Happen?*. The three-hour workshop will introduce the literacy resource kits and explore strategies to strengthen children's vocabulary, reading skills, phonemic awareness, and letter recognition.

Lorre Arial Bonilla, Executive Director of the ECCDC, is pleased to have such a longstanding partnership with the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara. "We are grateful to the Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara for subsidizing the costs associated with this innovative literacy project, and for their ongoing commitment and dedication to supporting Niagara's early learning sector over the past 20 years. We are also so thankful for the financial contribution the Kiwanis Clubs have made to the ECCDC for the lease of a community outreach van. Having a vehicle available for delivering resources has enabled our team to increase accessibility of the lending library and expand our reach throughout Niagara. It has been such a pleasure working alongside such dedicated and passionate volunteers".



Cheque presentation February 4, 2026 at ECCDC in Thorold

L-R: Melissa McLaughlan and Sarah Maragoudakis, ECCDC Board Vice-chair and Chair; Lorrey Arial Bonilla, ECCDC Executive Director; Brian McKeown and Linda Winston, Stamford Kiwanis Club; Stephen Hanns, Welland Kiwanis Club; Thorold Mayor Terry Ugulini; Sandie Greenhalgh, St. Catharines Kiwanis Club; Bob Wylde, Welland Kiwanis Club; Hayley Wutzke and Kelly Bol, ECCDC Staff



*Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time. The Kiwanis Clubs of Niagara contributing to this project include the St. Catharines Kiwanis Club, the Stamford Kiwanis Club, the Welland Kiwanis Club, and the Thorold Kiwanis Club. To learn more about how to become a Kiwanis Club Member, please visit [www.kiwanis.org](http://www.kiwanis.org) to find your local club.*

*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 emerging trends. The ECCDC exists so that early learning professionals are supported in offering exceptional opportunities to grow, learn and develop. In the 32 years since its creation by local volunteers, the ECCDC has become a leading early learning training, resource and referral organization. The ECCDC extends gratitude to our primary funder Niagara Region Children's Services.*

For further information, please contact Executive Director Lorrey Arial Bonilla at 905.646.7311 ext.321 or [arial@eccdc.org](mailto:arial@eccdc.org).