

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Grant helps Waterloo Region's newcomers and diverse populations address trauma and attachment needs**

Kitchener – June 20, 2017 – The Cowan Foundation has donated \$84,000 to Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region to adapt its Trusting Loving Connections © (TLC) group to meet the needs of Arabic-speaking refugees, First Nations, Metis and Inuit families, and French-speaking audiences.

The need has never been stronger. Since November 2015, more than 40,000 Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada and over 1,800 have settled in Waterloo Region<sup>1</sup>. Today, Waterloo Region falls within Canada's top 10 Census Metropolitan Areas for immigrant populations and by 2031, almost a third of the population will be a visible minority.

"Many of these families are arriving with complex issues related to their health and wellness as a result of traumatic histories, compounded by the experiences of coming to a new country with rules and society expectations that may differ drastically from their countries of origin," Karen Spencer, new Executive Director of Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region, said. "The Cowan Foundation's support for adapting this trauma and attachment program will make it possible for us to meet the needs of diverse populations in culturally appropriate ways."

Trusting, Loving Connections (TLC) is an evidence-based program developed by Diane Randall, Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region and KW Counselling. TLC is a trauma-informed intervention that seeks to help caregivers gain an understanding of how their own childhood experiences and attachment relationships affect their parenting and relationships with their children. Trauma-informed care considers adverse experiences. This approach emphasizes safety and encourages empowerment throughout the recovery process. Ultimately, it's about changing the culture of how we work with children and adults.

The adapted TLC program has the potential to help men and women coming from other cultures understand the relationship and parenting norms and expectations of Canadian society and reflect their own histories and the impact this has on their parenting and their children. It also helps them gain an increased understanding and trust in formal service systems.

Children who have experienced traumatic life events often express their trauma through their behaviours, with widespread effects, and difficulty with trusting caregivers.

"Responding effectively to child neglect and abuse is of enormous benefit to the individual, communities and society as a whole. It moves our work upstream so we're not addressing the symptoms but the root causes of systemic challenges that affect us all in direct and indirect ways," Mary Ballantyne, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), said.

The second year of the grant will focus on working in partnership with our Indigenous partners to explore the possibility of adapting TLC to help understand intergenerational trauma and to move forward in healing. "Truth and Reconciliation is not just about saying we are sorry, it's about acknowledging the past harms by Child Welfare on Indigenous children and families through colonization including Residential

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<sup>1</sup> Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region

Schools and the sixties scoop,” Stoddart said. “With the support of The Cowan Foundation this project will allow us to share resources and walk hand and hand in our efforts.”

One of the areas of focus for The Cowan Foundation is to provide support to transformational programs to assist with the overall health and well-being of children and youth and their supporting communities.

“Our organization works with the majority of the members within the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, and we were looking for a way to support the important work they are doing,” explained Larry Ryan, President, Frank Cowan Company. “Together, with our Foundation, we approached Family & Children’s Services of Waterloo Region, and they shared information about the TLC program. Our donation will expand this program to other audiences in the Waterloo Region, and through partnership with OACAS will then be transferable to other members’ communities.”

Spencer agrees.

“While responding to child abuse and neglect is a core mandate of Family & Children’s Services of the Waterloo Region, we’ve been working hard to provide effective interventions at the earliest point possible in order to minimize the impact of family issues on children’s development and prevent the re-occurrence of abuse or neglect,” Spencer said. “Early helping places the emphasis on intervening before the difficulties that families are experiencing intensify, multiply and create conditions where the likelihood of child abuse is heightened.”

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### **About Family & Children’s Services of the Waterloo Region**

Family & Children’s Services of the Waterloo Region is committed to building relationships with families and communities for the well-being and safety of children and youth. Our focus on in-home, early intervention services – including counselling, parenting programs, substance abuse treatment and more – means 97% of the families we work with get the help they need to care safely for their children at home. Early intervention can reduce the need for more intrusive services later and helps children flourish in a caring family setting. The Family & Children’s Services Foundation provides programs and services, not covered through government funding, to help children and families heal, learn and grow. Visit [www.facswaterloo.org](http://www.facswaterloo.org) to learn more.

### **About The Cowan Foundation**

The Cowan Foundation was started in 1995 in honour of Frank Cowan, the founder of Frank Cowan. The Foundation is sustained by the ongoing success of the Princeton Holdings group of companies including Cowan Insurance Group (and its subsidiaries: The Williamson Group, Millennium CreditRisk Management, Wentworth Financial Services and Cowan Financial Solutions), Frank Cowan Company, The Guarantee Company of North America and Cowan Asset Management. Together they provide insurance, wealth management and risk management products and services for individuals, businesses, organizations and public entities as well as assist employers with their group benefits, retirement and health and disability management plans. The goal of The Cowan Foundation is to make a positive difference in the lives of Canadians and the broader well-being of our communities. Learn more at [cowanfoundation.ca](http://cowanfoundation.ca).

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