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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Spirit Athletics is Niagara's Latest Certified Living Wage Employer**

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is pleased to announce that Spirit Athletics has become a certified living wage employer.

[Spirit Athletics](#) opened in 2018 and is owned by Rhys Ottaway. They are an athletic and character development program based out of St. Catharines that offers cheerleading, tumbling, and other fitness activities. They currently employ six part time staff.

"Our organization is built on a foundation of integrity, trust and inclusivity, and I believe that our employees are the full embodiment of these values. Spirit has been committed to providing more than fair wages since our inception and my hope is to be able to offer full time coaching and administrative positions in the future at a living wage or higher. It is my belief that our employees should not have to choose between something they love and affording the costs associated with living in our community. When I learned more about the Ontario Living Wage Network, it was an obvious choice to commit to the initiative - it benefits not only myself and our employees but our members and the community as well," says Spirit Athletics owner Rhys Ottaway.

"A living wage reflects what earners need to be paid based on the actual costs of living and being included in the community," says Glen Walker, Chair of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network. A living wage is not the same as the legislated minimum wage. It is a voluntary commitment that employers can make to compensate directly-employed and contract-employed full-time and part-time workers. The 2018 living wage for Niagara region has been calculated to be \$17.99/hour. If an employer provides benefits, such as dental and prescription drugs, as part of the total compensation package, the living wage can be lowered by about \$1.50/hour. Learn more about Niagara's living wage at [www.wipeoutpoverty.ca](http://www.wipeoutpoverty.ca)

Niagara-area employers who are interested in becoming Living Wage certified can contact the Ontario Living Wage Network for more information at <http://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/>

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The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is a collective of over 30 agencies and individuals working to wipe out poverty in Niagara through education, collaboration, and advocacy to address poverty's root causes.

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