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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The 2017 Living Wage Calculation for Niagara Region

With the annual cost of household living expenses for a Niagara region family of four conservatively pegged at over \$71,000, the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network has re-calculated the hourly wage necessary for families to meet these expenses, otherwise known as a living wage, to be \$17.57. Despite an increase in cost of living expenses, the 2017 living wage has risen only modestly from last year's calculation, thanks in part to the recently introduced federal Canada Child Benefit (CCB).

The Network has released two new reports, 'Calculating the Cost of Living in Niagara Region, 2017' and 'Calculating the Living Wage for Niagara Region, 2017', which outline the full evidence-based methodology used. The reports are available at www.wipeoutpoverty.ca

"The cost of living continues to rise across Niagara region and many families working at low wage jobs are struggling to make ends meet. A living wage is not the same as the minimum wage as it reflects what earners in a family need to be paid based on the actual costs of living and being included in a specific community", says Glen Walker, Chair of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network.

"Providing wages that allow a family to meet its basic household needs is one important tool to address cost of living challenges in Niagara region and should be top of mind of all employers," says Walker. "However, the reality is that many Niagara region businesses are struggling themselves to stay afloat, so other solutions must also be considered to help make life more affordable, such as improved public transit and access to more affordable child care."

The Ontario Living Wage Network has recently launched a provincial Living Wage employer certification program. The program provides a voluntary opportunity for employers to become recognized for paying their employees, both direct and indirect, the living wage calculated for their local community. The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is pleased to announce the first certified Living Wage employer for Niagara region is Pre-Line Processing, a metal parts processing facility and custom fabricator with five employees based in Lincoln.

"We believe an individual's productive contribution to our society should provide livability and no one should be working poor", says Damin and Debra Starr, owners of Pre-Line Processing. "As entrepreneurs, we know our business ventures need to do more than meet minimum standards. By voluntarily committing to the living wage model and encouraging our peers by example, we set the stage for a more desirable economic environment where everyone can benefit. Since implementation, we have seen positive impacts in focus, workplace morale, overall productivity and a reduction in employee turnover.

Niagara region employers interested in becoming Living Wage certified can contact the Ontario Living Wage Network to learn more about the process at <http://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/>

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