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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cultivating Hope Foundation is Niagara's Latest Certified Living Wage Employer

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network is pleased to announce that [Cultivating Hope Foundation](#) has become a certified living wage employer at the Champion level.

Cultivating Hope Foundation's mission is to reduce food insecurity in the Niagara Region by incorporating all aspects of what causes food insecurity into their program. They are starting to do this by growing fresh produce to donate to local charities and low-income families as well as providing on the job training for those who need employment or additional skills. They are based in Niagara Falls and currently employ one full time staff and one part time staff.

"As an organization trying to help reduce food insecurity in the Niagara region, we felt it was essential to be a part of the solution in any way possible. Being a part of the living wage program harmonizes with both our vision and our mission. Our employees must be the first to benefit from what we are trying to do as an organization", says Helen Castonguay, President and Executive Director of Cultivating Hope Foundation.

"We are pleased to see many local employers who recognize the value and benefits of paying at least a living wage. Paying a living wage takes direct action to address poverty and to help people afford their cost of living expenses," says Aidan Johnson, Chair of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network.

A living wage reflects what earners need to be paid based on the actual costs of living and being included in the community. 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 current living wage for Niagara region has been calculated to be \$18.12/hour. If an employer's total compensation package includes benefits such as dental and prescription drugs, the living wage can be lowered by at least \$1.00/hour.

Learn more about Niagara's living wage at www.wipeoutpoverty.ca. Niagara-area employers interested in becoming living wage certified can contact the Ontario Living Wage Network for more information at 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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