

Kiwanis International marks 100 years in Canada with celebratory convention in Toronto

Toronto, ON: Thousands of members from 80 nations are flocking to Toronto for the 101st Kiwanis International Convention, and the 100th Anniversary of Kiwanis in Canada. From June 23-26, the Metro Toronto Convention Centre will serve as convention headquarters for all education and networking opportunities, while outside the Centre, college age members will embark on a series of service project initiatives throughout the city. With more than 2,500 members in attendance this year, the event is expected to bring approximately over \$7.32 million in economic impact to the local community.

While last year's annual convention marked the 100th anniversary of the longstanding service organization as a whole, this year's event will celebrate Kiwanis' Canadian roots starting with a 100th birthday party at Roundhouse Park. The public is invited to the free event to celebrate the Canadian Kiwanis centennial from 3 to 5 p.m. Friday, June 24, where donuts from Tim Horton's and live music will be offered.

It was 1916 when Kiwanis expanded across the U.S. border following the formation of the first-ever Canadian club in Hamilton, Ont. Later in 1940, Canadian Walter Zeller, founder of the former retail chain Zellers, was the first donor to contribute to the Kiwanis International Foundation, which has since grown to become a multi-million dollar body that supports global service projects and awards grants to Kiwanis Clubs.

"Canada really put the *international* in Kiwanis International," remarked Vicki K. Hermansen, Public Relations Manager for Kiwanis.

Every year, a faction of attendees set out to give back to the host convention city through a variety of initiatives, and this year is no different. With a focus on serving Toronto's homeless community, members from Kiwanis' Circle K International (CKI), the world's largest student-led collegiate service organization, will take part in a Build Day with Habitat for Humanity. Additionally, members of CKI, as well as Kiwanis' Aktion Club, the only community service club for adults living with disabilities, will participate in a variety of meal preparation-related initiatives in partnership with the Toronto Ronald McDonald House, Red Door Family Shelter, Yonge Street Mission, and St. John the Compassionate Mission.

The 2016 Convention will officially begin with the highly anticipated address from Col. Chris Hadfield, featured keynote speaker. The former Commander of the International Space Station will also receive the Kiwanis International Humanitarian Award for Science Education.

"Toronto is a very welcoming city, and we look forward to our members having a fantastic experience there," said Hermansen. "Everyone really looks forward to this time of year as it's a chance to catch up with old friends, exchange best practices, and look at different projects and services happening around the world. We have no doubt our members will immensely enjoy our convention and the beautiful sights of Toronto."

"It's an honour to have Toronto serve as host city for the 100th anniversary of Kiwanis in Canada, and celebrate the global reach of their unwavering commitment to service projects," said Barry Smith, President and CEO of MTCC.

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About Kiwanis International

Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of clubs and members dedicated to serving the children of the world. Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for university students, Key Club for high school students, Builders Club for middle school students, Kiwanis Kids for elementary school students and Aktion Club for adults living with disabilities, annually dedicate more than 18.5 million hours and raise more than \$100 million to strengthen communities and serve children. Nearly 670,000 adult and youth members in more than 80 countries and geographic areas comprise the Kiwanis International family. For more information about Kiwanis International, visit www.kiwanis.org.

About the Metro Toronto Convention Centre

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre is Canada's number one convention and trade show facility. Over the past 30 years, the Centre has hosted over 18,000 events, entertained more than 55 million guests and has added \$5.1 billion in direct spending to the community. For further information, please visit www.mtccc.com.