i choose dign!ty

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Community march invites Waterloo Region to celebrate dignity, inclusion and belonging

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KITCHENER, June 11, 2018 – Families and community members will gather for the 6th annual *Count Me In! March* on June 14, 2018. Organized by Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region and part of the I Choose Dignity movement, the march aims to promote inclusion and belonging among residents of Waterloo Region, and we encourage individuals to take a stand and recognize that everyone matters.

"We're committed to fostering a safe and inclusive space for community members to engage in dialogue around community, dignity and belonging," says Allan Mills, executive director at Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region. "Now in its sixth year, the *Count Me In! March*, a disability pride event, will be an opportunity for families and community members to not only gather for a common cause, but hear firsthand stories of inclusiveness and belonging and learn to better welcome and recognize the contributions of people with developmental disabilities who are often marginalized. At the end of the day, every person plays an integral part in our community and we ask all residents to take responsibility to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect."

The event will include inspirational speakers, a community march, refreshments and free family activities, including a button-making station, face painting and balloon twisting, a musical drum circle and caricature sketches. Chief Bryan Larkin of Waterloo Regional Police Services will MC the event. Speakers include Christy Campbell, Clare & Evie Allgeier, Jeff Heer, Niki Stevenson and Al Mills, executive director of Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region.

This free event will take place on June 14 from 5 to 8 p.m. The event kicks off at 5 p.m. with a community march that will begin and end at Kitchener City Hall, located at 200 King St. W. For more information, please see the event poster. Be sure to visit www.eafwr.on.ca/6th-annual-count-me-in-march-i-choose-dignity/ and www.ichoosedignity.com, follow along on social media @EAFWR and @IChooseDignity, and use the hashtag #CountMeIn.

About I Choose Dignity:
I Choose Dignity is a movement born out of a wish to share with the community all of the wonderful skills and talents each citizen has to contribute. With our fellow community members, together we say, "Here we are. We want to contribute. We are part of this community and we have a lot to offer." We want to celebrate your gifts and ours. Championed by Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region.

About Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region:
Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region was founded in 1981 by parents of children with developmental disabilities as a way to build friendship and nurture community in Waterloo Region. As a local not-for-profit that serves nearly 2,000 adults and children with developmental and physical disabilities, EAFWR is committed to dignity, inclusion and belonging for all.

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