

NEWS RELEASE

April 27, 2019

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region invests OTF Grant into accessible employment opportunities

Kitchener, ON – Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region (EAFWR) welcomed members of the public to celebrate their Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) grant. Local MPP Laura Mae Lindo and OTF Grant Review Team member Gebre Berihun were on hand to congratulate staff and members and hear more about how the \$55,200 Seed grant has provided accessible employment opportunities at the Kitchener-Waterloo Library of Things (KWLOT) for people with disabilities who often face barriers to employment.

“For over thirty years, Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region (EAFWR) has been providing a range of programs and opportunities that benefit our friends and neighbours with developmental disabilities,” said Laura Mae Lindo, MPP Kitchener Centre. “I am thrilled to join the passionate community members and EAFWR staff who imagined the KW Library of Things, as well as the volunteers and new Librarians who have collectively made their unique vision a reality. Everyone deserves access to work and volunteer experience needed to find and maintain good jobs, and this employment approach ensures that folks with developmental disabilities are actively included in every aspect of our community so they, too, can realize their full potential. I look forward to hearing about the community-building and personal development that grows from this important Ontario Trillium Foundation investment.”

“We are grateful for Ontario Trillium Foundation’s investment in EAFWR’s social enterprise, Kitchener-Waterloo Library of Things and their accessible employment model,” said Al Mills, Executive Director of Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region. “As an organization rooted in community, dignity and belonging, we deeply value the gifts and contributions of people with disabilities. At KWLOT, our Librarians will not only gain workplace experience and develop valuable job skills, but have a chance to contribute meaningfully to our community.”

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 who serves nearly 2,000 adults and children with developmental and physical disabilities, EAFWR is committed to dignity, inclusion and belonging for all. Learn more at www.eafwr.on.ca. The Kitchener-Waterloo Library of Things (KWLOT) is a project of Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region and a space where community members can borrow infrequently used items such as tools, kitchen items or camping equipment. KWLOT opened its doors to the community on February 24, 2018 and now has more than 150 members who loan out items. To learn more, please visit www.kwlot.ca.

The [Ontario Trillium Foundation](http://www.otf.ca) (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations. OTF awarded more than \$100 million to some 629 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario.

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