

For Immediate Release

CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOL VALEDICTORIANS HELP PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION MAKE CANADA A *GRADUATION NATION*

(TORONTO) June 1 – Pathways to Education Canada is calling on all high school valedictorians to help in its national movement to make Canada a *Graduation Nation*. With a high school dropout rate in some of Canada’s low-income communities higher than 70 per cent, Pathways is encouraging valedictorians to use their graduation speeches to help spread the word that *all* students deserve the support and opportunities needed to graduate. Valedictorians who answer Pathways’ call and upload their speech to the organization’s Facebook page will have the opportunity to be featured nationally.

“High school valedictorians have the unique opportunity to address the future leaders of our country and individuals who know first-hand the importance of high school education,” said David Hughes, president and chief executive officer of Pathways to Education Canada. “It is the perfect opportunity for them to educate their fellow graduates on the importance of reducing dropout rates and making high school completion a national priority.”

Pathways’ *Graduation Nation* initiative is a five-year plan to help make Canada a country where all youth have an equal opportunity to graduate and make the often difficult transition to post-secondary education or training. Investments made into the program will help establish and sustain Pathways’ proven program in more than 16 high-need communities by 2016, supporting more than 10,000 students and alumni when these programs are at full capacity.

Starting today, for every person that visits and “likes” the *Graduation Nation* Facebook page (facebook.com/pathwaystoeducationcanada), Ernst & Young will donate one dollar to Pathways to help youth across the country graduate from high school.

Working alongside the school system, through a force of volunteers, the Pathways program delivers academic tutoring, group and career-oriented mentoring, student advocacy and financial assistance including transit tickets or meal vouchers, as well as academic scholarships for post-secondary studies. The program has had significant success in reducing dropout rates and increasing the rate of students going on to college or university.

About Pathways to Education Canada – www.pathwaystoeducation.ca

Pathways to Education Canada is a charitable organization that helps youth in low-income communities graduate from high school and successfully transition into post-secondary education or training. Pathways addresses systemic barriers to education by providing leadership, expertise and a community-based program proven to lower dropout rates. Founded in 2001, Pathways operates in eleven communities across Canada, with programs in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

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