

For Immediate Release

PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION CANADA LAUNCHES ELEVENTH SITE IN WINNIPEG

~ Pathways celebrates the first program site to help to reduce high school dropout rates in Manitoba ~

(WINNIPEG) June 28– Today, Pathways to Education Canada, a program dedicated to reducing high school dropout rates in disadvantaged communities across the nation, announced its further expansion with the launch of its first site in Manitoba. The program will focus on the North Point Douglas, Lord Selkirk Park and William Whyte communities of Winnipeg, which wrestle with a low socio-economic reality and the many challenges that reality represents. These neighbourhoods have now joined the growing list of communities whose students will be more likely to graduate from high school, go on to pursue post-secondary education and gain meaningful employment.

“Our government is very pleased to welcome the Pathways to Education program to Manitoba. We look forward to working with this organization as we move forward with many Bright Futures initiatives designed to help disadvantaged students stay in school, graduate and continue on to post-secondary education,” said Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy Minister Diane McGifford.

In May 2010, Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger named a 30-member Premier’s Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship. The council brings together Manitobans from public and post-secondary education and training, community development, First Nation, Métis and Aboriginal organizations, and newcomer and refugee organizations to share their experience in delivering programs and policy that ensure more Manitobans complete education and find meaningful employment. This Council was instrumental in bringing the Pathways program to Manitoba.

After an in-depth review process, Pathways to Education Canada has partnered with the Community Education Development Association, which will deliver the Pathways program at the community level in Winnipeg. The Association began in 1979 and provides services to families in the inner-city of Winnipeg with a focus on quality of life and education with specific programming in community economic development, community capacity building, and a range of education related programs from early childhood to teacher education. It has expertise working in inner city, multi-cultural neighbourhoods.

“There are two common views of the North End of Winnipeg – one that focuses on socio-economic problems such as violence and social chaos, and another that focuses on the change and transformation that the community and its residents desire and are working to create,” said Darlene Klyne, Pathways Program Director at the Community Education Development Association. “The timing of the arrival of Pathways to Education is perfect and will only work to expedite and complement the transformation that is already taking place in the community.”

Local youth and families site a range of barriers to academic success common to economically disadvantaged communities, including a lack of adequate supports. Data shows that while high school dropout rates for the wealthiest in society range from six to 11 per cent and provincial dropout rates sit between 20 and 30 per cent across the country, low-income communities tend to experience dropout rates of 40 to 60 per cent. This problem is most severe amongst the growing number of children of first and second-generation immigrants, single parents and Aboriginal families where dropout rates of 70 per cent and higher have been observed. Community Education Development Association will begin accepting participants in the North Winnipeg program this June. The Pathways program is expected to help significantly lower the dropout rate that this community currently sees.

“As Pathways to Education Canada expands across the country, from inner city neighbourhoods, to smaller urban centers, and now to Western communities, it remains focused on providing youth across the country with the resources and tools needed to realize their highest potential - transforming the communities from which they come,” said David Hughes, President and CEO, Pathways to Education Canada.

Pathways to Education was created to help reduce the dropout rate among youth in disadvantaged communities. Founded in 2001, in Toronto's Regent Park, the program has been successful in reducing the drop out rate in that community from 56 per cent before the Pathways program, to today's rate of less than 12 per cent. Pathways expanded in 2007 to include the Ontario communities of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale in Toronto, Kitchener and Ottawa, as well as the Quebec community of Verdun, in southwest Montreal. In 2009, the program expanded into Hamilton and Scarborough, Ontario, and in 2010, Pathways launched its first East Coast site in Halifax, Nova Scotia and another Ontario site in Kingston.

Pathways has found that students' dropping out of high school is often based on an inherent lack of opportunity and hope for the future, which is systemic in similar neighbourhoods across the country. The dropout rate has long-term national social and economic impacts, as students who drop out of high school tend to earn lower wages, pay less tax, commit more crime and have higher social services costs than students who graduate or those who achieve post-secondary education.

The Pathways to Education Program offers a comprehensive, community-based and results-focused approach that sets it apart from other programs in its holistic commitment to improving the opportunities of participating students. Pathways provides academic tutoring, group and career-oriented mentoring, student advocacy and financial assistance, including transit tickets or meal vouchers as well as academic scholarships, from a wide range of volunteers and community partners dedicated to working interactively with the students and alumni.

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.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Tonisha Bath, Citizen Optimum, 416.967.8125, tonisha.bath@citizenrelations.com