

For Immediate Release

EMPIRE LIFE INVESTS \$250,000 IN PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION'S GRADUATION NATION INITIATIVE

(Kingston, ON) April 6 – Today, Empire Life announced a \$250,000 investment over five years (2011-2016) in Pathways to Education Canada to support the local delivery of the program in the Kingston communities of Rideau Heights and Inner Harbour. Pathways to Education's Kingston site launched in September 2010 in partnership with Kingston Community Health Centres and already has 61 students registered in the program. This generous donation from Empire Life will help the Kingston site support more students, furthering Pathways to Education Canada's goal to help create a *Graduation Nation*.

"This investment reflects Empire Life's dedication to ensuring that Kingston youth have the resources and community support needed to graduate high school," said David Hughes, president and chief executive officer, Pathways to Education Canada. "Pathways to Education Canada recently made a call-to-action to make Canada a *Graduation Nation* where all youth have an equal opportunity to complete high school and realize the long term benefits of education. This donation is a step to seeing our vision become a reality."

Pathways to Education Canada recently launched a five-year plan to establish and sustain programs in up to 20 high-need communities and make universal access to education a priority issue for all Canadians. The support of Empire Life will help Pathways to Education take a step towards its goals in the Kingston area, but achieving this vision entirely will require a significant investment from additional partners.

"Every young man and young woman in our community deserves the opportunity to realize his or her full potential," said Les Herr, president and chief executive officer at Empire Life, "We are in a position to help them make that happen and we're excited to offer financial and other support to the program."

Pathways to Education's Kingston site has had an exciting start. The 61 students enrolled in the program are actively taking part in tutoring and group mentoring sessions, as well as field trips and social activities. Students have reported that since joining the Pathways to Education program, their grades have improved and they are receiving positive feedback from their teachers. A recent highlight for the students was attending several Kingston Frontenac OHL games thanks to Empire Life's generous donation of its box seats. Students had the opportunity to meet the players and create lifelong memories.

The Pathways to Education program provides 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 Pathways program has achieved tremendous results in its inaugural community where drop out rates have decreased by over 70 per cent and the number of students going on to college or university has increased by 400 per cent. The Boston Consulting Group calculates that an investment of \$1 in Pathways to Education generates a \$24 return to society through an increased tax base and decreased social costs. Since its inception in 2001, Pathways to Education has expanded to eleven communities across the country.

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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