



Local employers make public commitment to paying a living wage

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Eleven Guelph and Wellington based employers have been recognized as “Living Wage Employers” after making the commitment to pay over 1150 of their employees at least a living wage. The Ontario Co-operative Association <http://ontario.coop/> was proud to be acknowledged as an early adopter to the program at a breakfast event on November 6.

“Our 2015 living wage employer recognition program is part of a growing national trend that acknowledges that the minimum wage is not enough to raise a family,” commented The Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination (Poverty Task Force) coordinator, Randalin Ellery. “Across the country, communities are understanding that a successful economy and society depend on everyone in the workforce having the opportunity to earn a salary that allows them to provide for their family and be an active participant in the local economy.”

The Living Wage is a conservative estimate of what two full-time working parents need to earn hourly to raise two children. The local living wage is \$16.50/hour. This number calculated through a rigorous and reviewed process that is vetted nationally by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The local living wage conversation has been spearhead by the Poverty Task Force who are now reaching out to all employers encouraging them to sign on.

The Co-operators <http://www.cooperators.ca/> was recognized at the event as the first national company in Canada to make a commitment to paying a living wage in every community that it employs a team member. It is starting that process in Guelph & Wellington. Bernie Mitchell, Senior Vice President Human Resources and Workplace Services, of The Co-operators spoke at the event about how a living wage aligns with its principles.

“A living wage is good for our business and the community we work in, which is why we are proud to join the Living Wage program,” commented Mark Ventry, On Co-op’s executive director. “We believe that this public commitment to a living wage will help us find the right team members to grow our organization and is a real example of our commitment to be being a responsible employer.”

Included among the 11 employers recognized as living wage employers, are:

- Barking Dog Studios
- Downtown Guelph Business Association
- Groshe International Inc.
- Guelph Community Health Centre
- Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition
- Ontario Co-operative Association
- Pearl Street Communications
- RLB LPP
- United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin
- Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington

The Poverty Task Force is encouraging all employers to review their salary grids and wherever possible, ensure that staff are earning a living wage or more. Companies interested in committing to a living wage are invited to connect with the Poverty Task Force through Randalin Ellery at 800.265.7293 x 4359 or by email at Randalin@gwpoverty.ca.

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About On Co-op

The Ontario Co-operative Association believes that co-operatives build a better world. We are the trade association and capacity-building organization that develops, engages, educates and advocates for Ontario's 1,300 co-operative businesses. On Co-op is an information and resources network with a mission to *lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives*. Visit www.ontario.coop.

For more information about the Ontario Co-operative Association, please contact Mark Ventry at 1.888.745.5521 or at mventry@ontario.coop.

About Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination

The Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination (Poverty Task Force) works collaboratively, informed by diverse voices of experience, to take local action and to advocate for system and policy change to address the root causes of poverty. A copy of the Living Wage Report can be found at www.gwpoverty.ca.

For more information about the Living Wage program please contact Randalin Ellery, coordinator 800.265.7293 x 4359 | Randalin@gwpoverty.ca