



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

Growing Guelph: KidsAbility expands to serve more children, youth and families in Guelph

Guelph, ON, December 5, 2017 – For almost two decades, thousands of children and youth with special needs and their families in Guelph have benefited from KidsAbility’s life-changing therapy and support services in their own community. As referrals continue to outpace the space available, KidsAbility will create a new Guelph Hub to meet the changing and growing needs of Guelph families.

“Providing accessible, seamless and integrated care by bringing services as close as possible to families has always been a priority for KidsAbility,” says Linda Kenny, Chief Executive Officer of KidsAbility. “In 1999 when we first began offering services in Guelph, we saw just 17 children through a pilot project. The need was evident from the start and we have been proud to be a part of the Guelph community since then providing therapy and support services from two Guelph sites located at the West End Community Centre and on Woodlawn Road,” says Kenny.

For some families, accessing services from two locations in Guelph has meant travelling back and forth between the sites for multiple appointments. KidsAbility has successful centralized hub locations in Waterloo, Kitchener and recently, Cambridge. As the organization explored the future needs of Guelph, it became clear that a Guelph Hub would not only meet the needs of its clients and families today but the future as well.

“The demand continues to grow and both sites have long reached capacity. Our new Guelph Hub will allow KidsAbility to bring all of our services under one roof that will not only make it more convenient for families, but by expanding our physical space, we will be able to offer additional programs for our children and youth,” says Kenny.

The design of KidsAbility’s new Guelph Hub reflects Guelph’s unique needs, community partnerships and best practices in the care of children and youth with special needs. Construction will begin January 2018 to renovate the over 13,000-square-foot space located at 503 Imperial Road North in time for the planned move-in date of spring 2018. The renovation of the new facility will cost approximately \$1.2 million including construction costs, architect fees and equipment.

The new Guelph Hub will bring an additional 3,000-square-feet of space that will allow KidsAbility to offer new programs focused on youth and host specialized clinics currently only offered at KidsAbility’s sites in Waterloo Region. As well, the new Guelph Hub will boast a full-sized Resource Centre available to the community, large group therapy rooms not currently available at its two

existing sites, a fully accessible playground and more. This new Hub will provide many new opportunities for community collaboration to expand and enhance services available for Guelph families.

“We’re very excited about the creation of a new centralized hub in Guelph,” says Lisa Talbot, Executive Director of KidsAbility Foundation. “To help make this project possible, KidsAbility Foundation has launched a \$700,000 fundraising campaign. As a result, we will be reaching out to local businesses and community members in Guelph to support this initiative. Together, we can build a hub that will have a positive impact on children and youth for many years to come.”

Once known as the K-W Rotary Children’s Centre, KidsAbility began serving local children and youth from a small and humble site in Kitchener in 1957 thanks to the vision and support of Rotary. In order to be as close as possible to where children, youth and families live, learn, work and play, KidsAbility made the purposeful decision to offer services at multiple sites. Today, KidsAbility offers services from sites in Guelph, Fergus and Mount Forest in addition to Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. It is estimated that over the past six decades, approximately 60,000 children and youth with special needs have benefited from therapy and support services at KidsAbility. This year the organization marked its diamond anniversary and 60 Years of Potential Realized.

“We are proud to serve families and children with special needs in the growing Guelph community, and look forward to this new inclusive and fully integrated facility,” says Kenny.

If supporters would like to make a gift to KidsAbility’s Guelph Hub, they can do so by visiting the organization’s secure website at kidsability.ca/support or calling KidsAbility Foundation at 519-886-8886 ext. 1350. Every donation in support of children and youth with special needs in Guelph is appreciated!

Background Information

Founded and supported by Rotarians since 1957, KidsAbility™ Centre for Child Development is the recognized leader in Waterloo Region and Guelph-Wellington for empowering children and youth with a wide range of complex special needs.

KidsAbility's passionate and talented team of staff and volunteers provided therapy and support services to 6,963 children and youth with special needs last year. Providing services that are accessible, seamless, and focused on client and family-centred care remain core priorities for KidsAbility. In order to be as close as possible to where children and youth with special needs and their families live, learn, work and play, KidsAbility offers a wide range of services at multiple sites in Cambridge, Fergus, Guelph, Kitchener, Mount Forest and Waterloo.

KidsAbility serves children and youth from birth to school exit with special needs ranging from communication, physical, general and developmental delays, to more complex diagnoses such as autism, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and other rare medical syndromes. KidsAbility provides therapy and support to many children who do not yet have a diagnosis.

Although funded primarily through the Ontario Ministry of Children & Youth Services, KidsAbility Foundation inspires and engages community partners, individuals and groups to help make a difference in children's lives through donations. Donations raised annually allow KidsAbility to serve as many children as possible through innovative programs, talented therapists and advanced technology.

Through the generous support of donors, KidsAbility empowers thousands of children and youth with special needs to realize their full potential every year. There are 942 children who are waiting for services at KidsAbility. With continued support from our community, more children will be able to access the services they need to live the best lives possible and realize their full potential.