

MEDIA RELEASE

***Play it Fair!* Equitas launches program to help Ottawa kids stop discrimination and bullying**

Equitas and TD Bank Group team up to bring the recognized program to the capital

Ottawa – Nov. 20, 2012. To mark National Child Day, Equitas is launching its highly successful *Play it Fair!* after-school program to promote diversity and inclusion in Ottawa. On Nov. 20, local kids will take part in activities at the Taggart Family YMCA-YWCA to show parliamentarians, city officials and parents how they can be leaders in confronting discrimination and bullying.

"We help kids learn how to confront violence and intimidation by building self-esteem and respect for others," says Ian Hamilton, Executive Director of Equitas, a Montreal-based human rights education centre. "We believe that in Ottawa, as in over 20 communities where we work across Canada, children can lead the way to make their schools and neighbourhoods better places to be."

Play it Fair! is a program for 6-12 year-olds that has been building more inclusive communities across the country since 2006, and has reached over 80,000 children in 9 provinces this year. It equips child care workers, community partners and municipalities with practical tools and activities to get kids thinking about fairness and how to solve conflicts peacefully. With support from TD Bank Group, the program is expanding to Ottawa as well as in more cities across Canada.

"The youth are the future and it's important to teach them the value of respect and tolerance that encourage an inclusive environment," says Doug Feasby, Vice President, Commercial Banking, National Capital Region, TD Bank Group. "And we're thrilled to be involved in programs like *Play it Fair!* that fosters this type of thinking among our children in a caring and safe setting."

On Nov. 20, Equitas will offer a short introduction to the new after-school program with a demonstration of activities with 30 children 10-12 years old, the same activities that are expected to reach 1,500 more this year. A small reception hosted by the YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region will follow.

"In Ottawa, one in four high-school students reports having been bullied in school," says Julie Kon Kam King who coordinates the program nationally. "We help children understand the importance of respect and inclusion at an early age, and get them to identify issues and work together to create a space where all kids feel welcome."

When: Tuesday, Nov. 20, 3:30-5:30 pm

Who: 3:30 pm Speeches by Allan Hubley, City Councillor; Deirdre Speers, President, YMCA-YWCA of the NCR; Cathy Jowsey, Regional Manager Community Relations, TD Bank Group; Ian Hamilton, Executive Director, Equitas; and after-school staff testimonials.

4:00 pm Kids will play games from the *Play it Fair!* toolkit

Where: Taggart Family YMCA-YWCA, 2nd Floor, 180 Argyle Avenue, Ottawa

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact: Madeleine Bélanger, Equitas Communications Officer at 613-262-3878 (cell) or mbelanger.dumontier@equitas.org