



Media Release

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## New Business - Ford City Financial Opens In Ford City Business Neighbourhood

Windsor-Essex, Ontario Canada - Wednesday, November 15, 2017 - The United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County and the WindsorEssex Small Business Centre, a department of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation are pleased to announce the first recipient of the **Neighbourhood Small Business Grant Program is Ford City Financial.**

Ford City Financial, located in the Ford City Business Neighbourhood provides tax services, bookkeeping and other financial supports to clients in Windsor and Essex County. Originally run from a home office, Jose Gonzalez recently purchased a home and storefront on Drouillard Rd to launch his storefront. Ford City Financial fills a gap in the neighbourhood, being the only financial service business on Drouillard Rd. It is also filling a vacant storefront, and is giving back to the surrounding neighbourhood.

As a community benefit, Ford City Financial will be offering financial management training through the Ford City Neighbourhood Renewal *Do It Yourself* series, free income tax preparation for anyone who identifies as living in low income, and it will be providing the newly incorporated Ford City Residents in Action discounted bookkeeping services.

"I am really excited", says **Jose Gonzalez owner and operator of Ford City Financial.** "My family and I have put down roots in Ford City and are involved in the neighbourhood. Now I can run my business from here as well. I'll be putting the grant towards some renovations on the storefront, and to do some marketing in the community. I think my business can be another Ford City success story."

"By supporting neighbourhood residents' and opening and sustaining a small business, both the neighbourhood and the residents benefit," says **Lorraine Goddard, CEO United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County.** "It is through innovative partnerships like this grant and the community benefits that are generated, that neighbourhoods are revitalized, impact is created, communities are strengthened and prosperity for our region is realized."

**Sabrina DeMarco, Executive Director of the WindsorEssex Small Business Centre** adds, "We are proud of this collaborative initiative which encourages the growth of small business in priority neighborhoods and provides us more opportunities to deliver entrepreneurship programs and services at the community level."

As a part of the application process over 30 aspiring entrepreneurs, many of whom live within the United Way priority neighbourhoods, attended information sessions to learn more about the grant and its goals for their community. The majority of these members went on to pursue further small business learning by attending business planning workshops and working alongside Business Advisors available through the Small Business Centre.

The **Neighbourhood Small Business Grant** was the first grant of its kind. United Way and the Small Business Centre are planning to revisit the program to improve uptake and participation and another grant opportunity will launch in 2018.

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