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NEWS RELEASE

To: Assignment Editors, Reporters and Producers

Ottawa takes great strides in only one-year to be an even more welcoming city to new immigrants. Celebrate Welcoming Ottawa Week (WOW): June 23-28, 2014

OTTAWA (June 23, 2014) – On June 23, at 8 a.m, at City Hall, the [Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership \(OLIP\)](#) and the City of Ottawa kick off the [2014 Welcoming Ottawa Week \(WOW\)](#) during a breakfast reception with civic leaders, business executives, and representatives of the region's faith communities. The second annual WOW will be celebrated June 23 to 28, 2014 at various venues in the city, in the run up to Canada Day on July 1st. The celebration this year will build on the success of the inaugural WOW in 2013, when Ottawa Mayor, Jim Watson officially proclaimed the last week of June as Welcoming Ottawa Week.

"We have long recognized the value of immigration to our city's prosperity and vitality," said Mayor Jim Watson in June, 2013. *"Welcoming Ottawa Week will underscore our genuine respect and hospitality to newcomers, while at the same time creating opportunities for dialogue and interactions between newcomers and established residents."*

This year Welcoming Ottawa Week is bigger and bolder, with more public events that will engage Ottawa residents, new and old, in fun and stimulating activities. The [calendar of the 2014 Welcoming Ottawa Week](#) features cultural performances, sports tournaments, documentary screenings, town hall discussions, academic seminars, book launches, guided walking tours to discover hidden assets and histories of Ottawa, information fairs, and the first ever exhibition of photos and stories. There truly is something for all Ottawans to enjoy during this week that celebrates the ways our shared civic culture benefits from the contributions of Ottawa's diverse residents.

"We have four times more WOW events this year than we did last year, and a lot more sponsors from multiple sectors," said Hindia Mohamoud, director of OLIP. *"This important growth in only one year is a testament to our city's tremendous effort to welcome immigrants and OLIP partners' commitment to facilitate the settlement and integration of immigrants. Ottawa really is one of the most welcoming cities in Canada and we are extremely proud of this great achievement by all Ottawans."*

"We know it takes a community to welcome immigrants," said Sarah Onyango, 2014 WOW Co-chair. *"But community is not an abstract idea; it is constellations of connections between people sharing various interests". "WOW provides an ideal platform for Canada's capital city to connect and enrich its most precious asset: its people!"*

New to WOW this year is the WOW Ambassadors Award, which recognizes and celebrates Ottawans who show support, hospitality, and respect to immigrants as they find their way in Ottawa's community.

"The WOW Ambassador Awards are about recognizing and celebrating Ottawa residents from all walks of life who have welcomed newcomers and helped them thrive in their new home," said Louisa Taylor, 2014 WOW Co-chair. *"Ottawa's success depends on attracting and integrating immigrants effectively, and building personal networks is a key ingredient to that success."*

The welcoming spirit of the 11 WOW Ambassadors will be on display in a special exhibit at City Hall, *Faces & Stories of a Welcoming City*, curated by OLIP, Louisa Taylor, and photographer Dwayne Brown of [loveOttawa](#).

The 2014 WOW begins on Monday, June 23rd at 8:00 a.m., at City Hall, with a launch breakfast reception hosted by OLIP and the City of Ottawa, and featuring reflections by Mayor Jim Watson on *Ottawa as a Welcoming City*, the WOW Ambassadors Awards ceremony, the unveiling of the *Faces & Stories of a Welcoming City* and a preview of the highlights of the Week. The Mayor will also speak to the Municipal Immigration Strategy, which sets directions for the City of Ottawa in the integration of Immigrants.

The Week will conclude with a closing ceremony at Community Cup at Brewer Park, on Saturday, June 28 (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM) – two days before Canada Day, in order to accommodate the start of Ramadan this year. More than 2,000 guests are expected to gather to enjoy this fun-filled family event, with soccer matches, demonstrations of sports favored by immigrants such as Speedminton, Judo, Skateboarding, and Tai Chi, children’s games, an international food bazaar, and many more activities throughout the day. At 1:00 p.m. everyone can witness a citizenship ceremony where 40 new immigrants will give their oath of citizenship and receive their Canadian citizenship.

Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership

The Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) was founded in October 2009 by the City of Ottawa and Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI). The partnership is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada with the mandate of improving local capacity to attract, settle and integrate immigrants. Visit the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership online at www.olip-plio.ca

-30-

Media Contacts: WOW Co-chairs: [Louisa Taylor and Sarah Onyango](#), OLIP director Hindia Mohamoud, Aaron Burry, City of Ottawa, and Awarded WOW Ambassadors will be available for interview at the 2014 WOW Launch Breakfast, on June 23rd, at City Hall. To arrange for an interview or for more information, please contact:

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