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**A DECADE OF EMPHASIZING MENTAL WELLNESS FOR ALL
Celebrating 10th annual Hatsquerade Gala and \$1 million milestone**

October 31, 2018 (Toronto) – The momentous 10th annual Hatsquerade Gala was a celebration of 10 years of support for those living with and affected by mental illness and addictions. With the help of generous donations received at the Gala, Hats On for Awareness (HOA) will be able to meet its goal of distributing, cumulatively, \$1 million in its 10th year to mental health programs and initiatives across the GTA.

“Back when Hats On was just a twinkle in our eye, we dreamed of raising money for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and making a difference in the lives of people living with and affected by mental illness and addiction,” said HOA co-founder and Chief Visionary Officer, Enza Tiberi-Checchia.

“A decade later we are on our way to distributing more than \$1 million to mental health programs and initiatives and this unimaginable milestone would not be possible without the unwavering support along the way.”

More than 1,000 people attended the 10th annual Gala at Universal Event Space in Vaughan on October 26 and wore a hat to show support and raise awareness. Just like at the inaugural Gala, a decade ago, a parade of supporters donning stunning hats officially opened the show.

HOA Co-Founders Enza Tiberi-Checchia and Benny Caringi formally thanked supporters who have been with the organization since 2009, as well as the many sponsors of the 10th annual Gala.

Over the last year, HOA has showcased significant milestones from the organization’s history on social media. Among its many accomplishments: enhanced advocacy work and encouraging others to share their stories to end the stigma around mental illness.

Leading by example, Enza Tiberi-Checchia is sharing her lived experience with mental illness through her ground-breaking blog, Mi Etcetera, in which she reveals her journey through illness, healing, recovery and thriving. Future Hats On funds and advocacy will seek to support



mental illness from unresolved childhood trauma and support for those left behind after a suicide, Enza Tiberi-Checchia told attendees.

HOA began as a promise made 28 years ago when the Tiberi family patriarch, Giovanni, lost his battle with depression and took his own life. After his death, Enza realized she did not understand or know enough about depression and she then made a promise to help prevent this from happening to other families.

Recipients of donations to HOA include CAMH, of which HOA fulfilled a \$270,000 pledge toward a dedicated volunteer lounge and a patient room along with continued support year-over-year, Jack.org's National Student Summit, a pledge of \$150,000 to Humber River Hospital's Mental Health and Addictions Program as well as funds to What's Up Walk-In, a collective of six clinics in the Greater Toronto Area providing immediate, free counseling to those in need.

"In the past year, since Hats On has been involved in helping us with our promotional material, we've had about 5,000 visits across all six agencies, which is a 57 per cent increase in the number of clients who access our walk-in, which is incredible," said Emma Turner, a clinical supervisor at What's Up Walk-In.

"We are overwhelmed and so proud of how Hats On has helped countless individuals and families through our benefactors' important work and we pledge to keep striving toward mental wellness for all," said HOA Co-Founder Benny Caringi.

This year's Hatsquerade emcee was Z103.5 radio announcer Tony Monaco and the crowd was entertained by Canadian icons Kardinal Offishall, Jully Black, famous rock band Platinum Blonde as well as a surprise video message from Grammy award-winning artist, Alessia Cara.

For more information about Hats On For Awareness, visit www.hatsonforawareness.com.
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