



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Niagara River Lions Partner with MentorAction and Local Women's Organizations to Implement Coaching Boys into Men Program (CBIM) and Coaching Leadership Equity and Respect (CLEAR)

Program facilitation to be led by Gillian's Place and Birchway Niagara, partnering agencies in the delivery of CBIM and CLEAR.

Niagara Region, ON – January 27th, 2026 — Interval House of Hamilton (IHOH), through its prevention education program MentorAction, is proud to announce a new partnership with the Niagara River Lions of the Canadian Elite Basketball League (CEBL) to support the delivery of *Coaching Boys into Men* (CBIM) and Coaching Leadership Equity and Respect (CLEAR) programs across the Niagara region. MentorAction is a program of Interval House of Hamilton and provides leadership in engaging men and boys in the prevention of gender-based violence through evidence-informed education and mentorship.

Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) and CLEAR are nationally recognized, evidence-based prevention programs that engage coaches and athletes in meaningful conversations about healthy relationships, respect, consent, and leadership. Delivered through sport, the programs leverage the influential role of coaches to help prevent gender-based violence before it begins.

Gillian's Place and Birchway Niagara, will lead local facilitation and delivery, ensuring the program is trauma-informed, community-rooted, and responsive to regional needs.

"The Niagara River Lions believe in the power of sport to build character and shape communities," said Michelle Biskup, President, Niagara River Lions. "The partnerships with Gillian's Place and Birchway Niagara reflect our shared commitment to prevention and community leadership. Working alongside MentorAction to bring Coaching Boys into Men and CLEAR to Niagara reflects our commitment to leadership, respect, and positive social impact—both on and off the court."

"Coaches play a critical role in shaping how young people understand respect, relationships, and responsibility," said Sue Taylor, Executive Director of Interval House of Hamilton "We are proud to partner with the Niagara River Lions and work alongside Gillian's Place and Birchway Niagara to deliver this program in a way that is locally led and deeply connected to the community."

Gillian's Place and Birchway Niagara will oversee program facilitation and delivery, bringing extensive expertise in prevention education, survivor-centered approaches, and community engagement.

"Prevention is most impactful when organizations work together" said Nicole Regehr, Executive Director of Gillian's Place. "This partnership helps us reach boys and young men early, fostering conversations that prevent violence before it starts - because prevention and early intervention are essential to breaking the cycle of abuse"

"This initiative reflects a shared commitment to proactive, prevention-focused solutions that strengthen communities and promote safe, respectful sport environments across Niagara", said Executive Director of

Birchway Niagara, Jennifer Gauthier.

“Our government believes that gender-based violence has no place in Ontario, which is why we are supporting survivors and funding prevention programs through a four-year action plan that is backed by an investment of \$1.4 billion,” said Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

“Ontario is proud to work with community partners to deliver the Coaching Boys into Men and Coaching Leadership Equity and Respect programs because all Ontarians deserve to live free from the fear of threats, exploitation and violence.”

For more information about *Coaching Boys into Men*, CLEAR, or this partnership, please visit mentoraction.org

About the Niagara River Lions

The Niagara River Lions are one of the founding franchises of the Canadian Elite Basketball League (CEBL) and the league's reigning back-to-back champions (2024 & 2025). Competing out of the Meridian Centre in downtown St. Catharines, from May to August each season, the River Lions proudly represent the twelve municipalities of the Niagara Region, uniting fans through passion, pride, and purpose.

About Interval House of Hamilton and MentorAction

Interval House of Hamilton (IHOH) provides shelter, safety, and support for women and children experiencing violence. Its prevention education arm, MentorAction, engages men and boys in ending gender-based violence through evidence-based programming. MentorAction implements *Coaching Boys into Men* (CBIM) and *CLEAR*—both developed by the globally recognized organization Futures Without Violence—in partnership with schools, sports organizations, and communities across Ontario.

About Gillian's Place

Gillian's Place provides support, shelter, and prevention education to women, children, and families impacted by gender-based violence in the Niagara region. As a trained partner through MentorAction, Gillian's Place leads facilitation of prevention programs that promote safety, respect, and community well-being.

About Birchway Niagara

Birchway Niagara supports individuals and families experiencing abuse across South Niagara through emergency shelter, outreach, counselling, and prevention education. As a trained MentorAction partner, Birchway Niagara plays a key role in delivering evidence-based prevention programs that engage communities in building safer, healthier futures.

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