



THE CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM
LE MUSÉE CANADIEN DU CANOT

NEWS RELEASE

The Canadian Canoe Museum connects with students around the world as part of 48-hour Skype-a-Thon

*Students from eight countries, including India, Russia and Vietnam,
visit the museum via virtual field trip*

PETERBOROUGH, ON, November 14, 2018 – The Canadian Canoe Museum’s team of educators has been at work around the clock, offering students from around the world a glimpse of Canada, by canoe, as part of a 48-hour Skype-a-Thon.

From the museum’s galleries on Monaghan Road, the team has connected with more than 200 students so far, and expects to reach another 200 today as part of the second half of this global education event, through the Microsoft Educator Community.

With 14 virtual field trips scheduled, yesterday students from Georgia, India, Argentina, the United States, Russia and Vietnam visited the home of the world’s largest collection of canoes, kayaks and paddled watercraft to learn about this Canadian icon.

Today, students from Utah, New Jersey, Kansas, Manitoba, Idaho and The Philippines are expected for their virtual visits. Certainly, the museum will contribute to Microsoft’s worldwide goal to travel 14 million virtual miles via Skype. And, with every 400 virtual miles traveled, Microsoft is supporting education resources for a child in need through WE.

“Teachers from around the world are reaching out because they can get a glimpse of Canada, by canoe. International schools want to know about Canada – there is an incredible interest,” said Karen Taylor, Public Programs Manager.

“We are always committed to sharing our one-of-kind collection with students around the world, but knowing that we’re also supporting students in need is extra motivation to offer programming all day and late into the night.”

The virtual field trip program, *Canada By Canoe*, offers a whirlwind tour to diverse geographic regions of Canada to explore the traditional Indigenous watercraft and the diverse peoples who build them, featuring close-up building demos, unique artifacts and lots of interaction between students and our educators.

Bill Buxton, Principal Researcher, Microsoft Research, happened to be on-site at the museum during the Skype-a-Thon, in his role as Jack Matthews Fellow.

“I started working on these types of technologies back in 1987, and I have to say that in some sense, we knew what was coming and we had hopes, but, the reality is that we never conceived that what’s going on, reflected by the Skype-a-Thon, was really going to happen,” said Mr. Buxton.

“This is actually possible, and it doesn’t require a Ph.D. in computer science, and it is affordable. And so, one of the best things about being old – and there’s not that many – is to actually see dreams come true and being used this way; and it doesn’t need you, because it just works, and people get it, and they’re doing things you never dreamed of.”

On an ongoing basis, virtual field trips are offered to schools more than a two-hour drive away from the museum. Students of all ages take part in interactive explorations of the fur trade, and of the Indigenous origins of birch bark canoes, cedar dugouts and skin-on-frame kayaks, customized to the history and cultures of their location. Last year, the museum connected with close to 3,400 students via virtual field trip.

The museum also offers more than 20 hands-on, experiential education programs for students and youth groups from kindergarten to grade 12 – by day and overnight. In 2017, close to 5,750 students visited the museum in person. Field trips are guided by educators offering curriculum-connected programming in both French and English.

-30-

An image of museum educators delivering a virtual field trip, as part of the 48-hour Skype-a-Thon, accompanies this release.

For further information:

Alicia Doris, Director of Communications

alicia.doris@canoemuseum.ca

(705) 748-9153, ext. 221