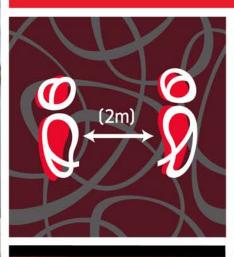


experiences CANADA EXCHANGES

2019-2020 YEAR BOOK







We see a Future in their Future

Skills Development Networking Work Experience Mental Well-Being Our youth are full of potential. With the world of work changing, we need to help ensure that they're prepared for what's next. That's why we created RBC Future Launch, a program that increases access to skill development, networking opportunities, work experience and mental well-being supports and services. Empowering the youth of today for the jobs of tomorrow. **rbc.com/futurelaunch**



Empowering the youth of today for the jobs of tomorrow.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage.

We would also like to thank our national sponsors:





Foundation Fondation

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Stronger

Together

Communities







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Experiences Canada student exchanges and forums develop community leaders and informed citizens of tomorrow.

Experiences Canada is a national registered charity that helps young Canadians to explore their country in ways they never may have imagined through reciprocal exchanges, forums, conferences and other opportunities to connect with one another.

For 85 years, Experiences Canada has opened young people's minds and involved them in a broader world. We offer transformative learning opportunities accessible to youth across Canada – creating fun, safe, memorable experiences that deepen their connection to their community and their country, enrich personal relationships, and build confidence and skills.



💩 VISION

D MISSION

We open young peoples' minds and involve them in a larger world

We offer transformational learning opportunities accessible to youth across Canada — creating fun, safe, memorable experiences that deepen their connection to their community and their country, enrich personal relationships, and build confidence and skills



...in the capabilities and potential of youth

...learning is an adventure

...young Canadians need to know their own country's diverse histories, cultures, and challenges first to better understand the world ...the most memorable experiences are shared experiences.

...exposure to new spaces and ideas will enable youth to see their world differently

...every youth deserves the opportunity to participate ...every youth deserves to be respected and included

...the safety and security of our youth is paramount

...everyone learns differently

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF EXPERIENCES CANADA



his year my term as Chair of the Board is ending. Although this year is perhaps going to be the most remarkable in my time at Experiences Canada, I have been inspired by the constant evolution and creativity in the organization during my eight-year tenure on the board. We have supported new programs and watched as our reach into communities across Canada has expanded. We have created new opportunities for youth to participate in discussions about key issues facing our country, and increasingly, we have involved youth directly in the shaping and delivery of our programs and services.

Like many of our stakeholders, finding ways to meet our vision and mission in a world where physical exchanges have not been possible has been a challenge. We saw our programming shift online, beginning with the first Online Reconciliation Conversations Series produced in just 6 weeks following the start of the pandemic. We deeply appreciate the support of our financial partners, Canadian Heritage and RBC Foundation for their immediate support to enable these shifts in programming. We are also most grateful to the staff of Experiences Canada for their creative thinking and agility to rising to this challenge, and to the many partnering organizations and exceptional speakers who responded so quickly and fully to our request for their help and expertise to make it happen.

Looking through the pages of this book, seeing the photos and testimonials from exchanges that happened prior to the outbreak of the global pandemic COVID-19 last March, it seems a lifetime ago! We all anxiously await the opportunity when we can once again see young people embracing each other, enjoying the discovery of new places, and traveling together. We often talk about our vision as opening up young people's minds and involving them in a broader world. Throughout my time here, I have had the honour and privilege to meet with hundreds of youth from across the country, and experience Canada from their perspective. In fact, they have opened my mind, making me more thoughtful about the potential every one of us has to make a difference.

My gratitude goes out to the staff and the Board of Directors of Experiences Canada and all volunteers and organizers who make it possible for youth to participate in our programs.

Judith Sullivan-Corney





A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

bout this time last year, it looked like we were headed for an unprecedented year of travel and exchanges. We just had no idea how true that would turn out to be!

The school year began with a promising start - lots of travel plans for the coming year and a new Youth Leadership Forum in development. I recall taking our newly hired Youth Forums coordinator Sarah Hanson on the road with me for the first two weeks of March to scout locations for a future Forum in Calgary, as well as meet with program partners involved in the Reconciliation Forum in Winnipeg. At that time, were monitoring reports of COVID-19's spread across the globe, but none of the protocols that have now become standard in our lives were common practice. At every meeting, we awkwardly hesitated between a handshake and an elbow bump, respectful of the growing concern about the unknown virus. We were wrapping up our last meeting before heading back home on March 9 when Canada declared its first coronavirusrelated death and media started to use the phrase global pandemic.

For many of our linguistic exchange participants, they had already completed the first leg of their journey, and several groups were in the middle of their travels when the federal government order to shut down was issued. Our first priority was to get everyone home safely. Then the most challenging part of the year began, undoing travel plans for more than 2000 youth. first postponing them, and then later canceling them when it became clear that the pandemic would endure much longer than any of us could have imagined. For those of you who never got to travel yourselves and complete the exchange, we share vour disappointment and hope that there will be another opportunity either by rebooking of your group travel when it is safe to do so or participating in the virtual exchanges being offered in 2021.

The Virtual Exchanges will offer individual youth as well as groups the opportunity to connect online this year and share in the discovery of each other's community through the creation of multi-media projects they first share with one another, and then contribute to THIS! Is Canada -an interactive map of Canada that will feature the stories of all participating youth.

It is one of the silver linings that has come out of our pandemic experience. Like everyone, the shift to online learning was abrupt, and we've learned a lot since we started with the Online Reconciliation Conversations series in May. Although it will never replace the opportunity to gather in person, we do believe that these times have helped to inspire our thinking about other ways of bringing youth together so they can learn from each other.

With travel still not likely until the end of 2021 at the earliest, we're planning additional online conversations to encourage youth to stay informed and engaged in the issues that affect their community. We hope that these experiences will also help them to continue to build on their own personal confidence and skills so they are more than ready when it is time to adventure out into the real world again.

Deborah Morrison

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Experiences Canada is widely recognized as Canada's leading service provider for youth exchanges. Launched in 1936 and previously known as SEVEC, Experiences Canada arranges travel, accommodation and programming for an estimated 5000 young Canadians and their chaperones who participate in reciprocal exchanges and youth events annually to better explore their country's rich history, culture, and geography.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Judith Sullivan-Corney (Chair) Adam Young Alena Jackson Arlene Van Ruiten Dave McInnes David Ross Denise Nawata Greg Owen Melanie Martin Paul Ash Roger Paul Stuart Coxe

EXPERIENCES CANADA STAFF

Deborah Morrison—President and CEO Ellen Glouchkow—Director of Finance and Administration Jamie McCullough—Director of Programs Rebecca Leikin—Director of Development Lizzy Devine—Manager of Communications / Graphic Designer Sandrine Thabet—Manager Exchanges Program Ashley Reaume—Program Coordinator Eleanor Fogolin—Communications Assistant Ginny Byrne—Finance Assistant Minh Hoa Kolie—Program Coordinator Sarah Hanson—Youth Forum Coordinator

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

n behalf of the Audit and Finance Committee of Experiences Canada I am pleased to report the financial results for the 2019-20 fiscal year. This report is derived from our audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2020, which are available on our website or upon request.

Experiences Canada completed its first year of a three-year funding agreement with the Federal Government's Exchanges Canada Program. We wish to thank the Minister and staff at the Department of Canadian Heritage Exchanges Canada for their steadfast support and commitment to our program.

The pandemic brought significant challenges to our programming. Approximately 43% of our groups were unable to travel due to the lockdown as of mid-March. Experiences Canada quickly transitioned to an on-line presence with a virtual forum entitled Reconciliation Conversations in the spring 2020, and a second series BLM – Anti-Racism Conversations this Fall. We are launching a Virtual Exchanges program in January 2021, which will continue to bring youth together, until they can meet face-to-face again.

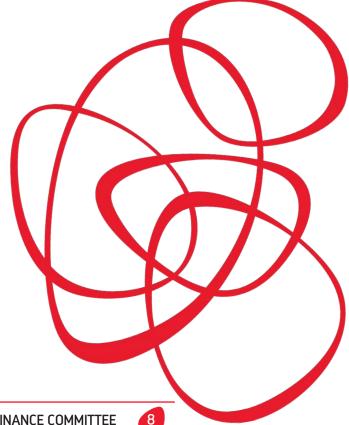
Due to the pandemic, 2019-20 revenue was down by 36% at \$3.76 million compared to the previous year's revenue of \$5.90 million. Net expenditures also decreased by 37% from last year, from \$5.94 million to \$3.73 million. Special measures funding of \$48,497 was provided to groups that did complete travel to ensure equal access to the exchange program.

We would like to thank our individual contributors and funding partners RBC, Canada Life, Uniglobe, Westjet and Air Canada, for their generous support of this year's programs.

Denise Nawata

+ Davata





INVESTMENT IN YOUTH PROGRAMS:

\$3,726,596 IN 2019/20



Youth Travel \$2,411,127



Program Delivery Nat'l Coordination \$942,865



Youth Forum \$69,938

1%

Special Measures \$48,497



Marketing/PR \$99,199



Corporate/Other \$154,970

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A MESSAGE FROM SANT PRAKASH SINGH - PRESIDENT, YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

ello everyone! I'm Sant Prakash Singh, and I have been on Experiences Canada's Youth Advisory Committee for the last three years. Over the last year, I had the pleasure of serving as the President of the YAC, along with serving as Secretary the year prior.

I first got involved with Experiences Canada in February of 2018 as part of a cultural exchange to Hay River, Northwest Territories. After spending ten days with the native Dene youth of Hay River, I learned about their rich culture and history, along with the obstacles and roadblocks they face. This exchange I went on shifted my perspective of Canada as a whole, along with giving me friends and memories for a lifetime. After my exchange, I became increasingly passionate about issues that affect Indigenous peoples and wanted to make a difference, so the Youth Advisory Committee was a perfect fit for me.

The goal of the YAC has always been to promote and enhance the lifechanging experiences of national travel and cultural experiences for youth that we, as past participants, have personally benefited from. YACers worked together to enhance Experiences Canada's social media presence, to increase outreach to local communities and schools, and to give insight for future exchanges and forums. It has been such a rewarding experience to lead a team of passionate and involved youth from all corners of Canada. We are always learning to be flexible with all obstacles we face while developing creative ways for us to achieve our goals.

Although this year has been sidetracked by the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not be more proud of the YAC and Experiences Canada as a whole. We cannot see each other in person at our Annual General Meeting, but I take solace in knowing that everyone has been working hard to work around the hurdles we were

presented this year. I am especially proud of the new online efforts that Experiences Canada has made, like the Black Lives Matter and Anti-Racism Conversations held on Zoom. Not only are these discussions important to have, but they also push the boundaries of how people can connect, learn, and socialize online. Experiences Canada is pushing the boundaries of online programs in a truly unprecedented time.

I would like to thank the entirety of the Youth Advisory Committee for a wonderful and incredibly productive year. I would also like to thank our Program Coordinator, Ashley Reaume, for mentoring us all year long and supporting us through all the goals we had. I am thankful for all of the wonderful people I have met at Experiences Canada and have grown to appreciate the dedication, organization, and passion that goes into connecting youth all over Canada.



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YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Experiences Canada believes in youth engagement and strongly encourages youth leadership. Youth Ambassadors are responsible for documenting their exchange through photos, videos and to write reflections during their exchange. They also help share their groups exchange experience with Experiences Canada and our partners.

Experiences Canada would like to thank this year's youth ambassadors:

Abaigeal Shimaro Abigail Skiles Aeva-Grace Dempster Alex Bogle Alexandra Marshall Denae Penner Alexandrine Golliez Destiny Armstrong- Laurence Ippersiel Rosalie Hurtubise Aliva Mack Alyson Demers Alyssa Regie Amélie Giroux Anders Dorney Anna Rossing Ann-Sophie Lagueux Ariana Duerksen Arianne Maranda Arielle Poitras Ashley Tricker Ava Giggs Avery Kamelchuk **Béatrice Morones** Beckett Parker Breena Clark-Mclellan **Bryson Nerysoo** Camille Péloguin Morency Catherine Morisset Jacob Allard **Charlee Granek** Charles-Antoine Bilodeau Charlotte Tremblay Jordynn Peters Chloe Lapenna Wierenga Christopher Deschambeault-Morin

Clara Leclerc D'anna Luce Dana-Ève Turbide Darby Graham-Rowe

> Wilson Ella Parsons Ella Wilson Ély Morin **Emilie Giscard Emily Mccormack** Georgia Wark Grace Martin Grace Simonee Greta Romas Gryffin Jamin Harriet Newcombe Hazel Brooks Helena Blenkinsop Héloïse loubert Ikram Hafidha Bentaleb Isabella De Sousa Ishita Mann Jackson Houvenaeghel Jada Baptiste Jaime Harrington Jeremy Tratch Iorie Chaboillez Joyce Min Karsen Oun Katarina Dyck Katelyn Erickson-

Hughes Katie Boswell Kaydn Gough Kelly Graham **Kiera Bogle Kiera Yeomans** Léa Huet Leah Burke Létycia Doucet Lilv-Ann Durocher Livia Fleischmann Loukas Bolduc Luke Drafi Mackenzie King Makenna Souliere Mara Pelletier Marie-Philippe Têtu Sophia Allan Maxim Quesnel Maya Nolan Mélita Beaudry Mélodie Lacroix Mercedes Beauvais-Desroches Michael Losier Monica Roman Mrunmavie Vaidva Xavier Brown Golthi Mya Greeley-Driedzic Nabi Park Nicole Arceo Olivia Tafel Pedlar Paige Leitch

Paige Randall

Patrick Creamer

11

Pénélope Chainey Philémon Brossard Providence Wilson Raphaelle Jacques Rémi Gervais **Rhiannon Davies Rosalie Morin** Ruby Boyd Samantha Charles Horne Samantha Monette Sara Miller Sarah Mcclelland Sélina Leclerc Séréna Sevigny Sofia Kadiri Matthieu Marchand Sydney Stevens Tamara Robson **Taylor Reimer** Teresa Carty Tessa Webber Thomas Larivée Vélina Quellet Victoria Lemieux Giusti Victoria Peters Zachary Duguay Zoev Oloriz Zuva Turner-Tan

YOUTH AMBASSADORS

GROUP ORGANIZERS

Experiences Canada's reciprocal exchange program relies on the hundreds of group organizers who help organize the exchanges and ensure the safety and security of our youth while they are traveling and visiting.

Whether they are classroom teachers, sports coaches, or community organization leaders, they put in countless volunteer hours to bring these experiences to life. If you're reading this and you haven't yet taken the time to thank your group organizer and chaperones for making your trip possible, it's not too late to tell them! Go ahead: seek them out and let them know!

We would like to express our thanks to the following 2019-20 group organizers:

Aaron Fosseneuve Alain Riou Alan Macdonald Ally Cooper Amie Dorcas Amita Khandpur Anita Vibe Annie Bertrand Annie Coulombe Arden Court Ashley Lawrence Astrid Godin Audrey Severson Beniamin Grimstead **Brady Fischer** Brandy Kozowy **Bruno Boucher** Carl Hardy **Caroline Carrier** Caroline Hardy **Caroline Panfili Catherine Harvey** Cathy Ann Mulligan Cathy Robson Charlee Mappin Charlene Dobie **Charlene Pauls Cheryl Fiske** Christianne Wiigs Christopher Rolle Claudia Bereznai Codie Clarke

Daria Murgu **Dave Loubier Dave Loubier** David Thickett Denise Lipscombe Diana Bradbury Diane Beulens **Didier Lebreux** Elaine Deschamps Eric St-Pierre Erin Boehm **Eve-Line Boisjoly** Frances Zevenbergenloosse Grace Christian Grant Edgar Greg Davidson Guillaume Voyer Hayley Atkins Heather Fraser Heather Slaney Helen Smith-MacPhail **Janav Eccles** lane Greenwood Janine Vis Jennifer Lussier-Price Jérôme Doré lill Wark Joanne Lussier Joëlle LeGresley **Iohanne** Dion

John Bole John MacLeod Iosée Allard Iulie Pilote Kara Nolan Karen Reed Kari Goethe Karina Pelletier Karine Courchesne Katervna McNicol Katlyn Redding Kelsey Wilson Kim Holmstrom KIMBERLY MATHIEU Kori Nagle Kyla Macdonald Laura Bereza Lauren Hiller Lisa Marie Thériault Lisandre St-Amant Litia Fleming Liza Mclaughlin Loni Kenny Louise Plante Louise-Natalie Turgeon Marc Ferron Margaret Benham Maria Power Marie Peterson Marie-Claude Bédard Marie-Claude

Poirier Marie-Claude Pouliot Marie-Eve Beauchemin Marie-Eve Bissonnette Marie-Josée Savard Marlene Bergsma Martin Arsenault Martin Perron-Tremblay Meaghan Graham Megan Leusink Megan Romas Mélissa Rousseau Michael Moonev Michael Ross Michel Côté Michèle Robichaud Mike Sharratt Nancy Gauthier Natalie Lemieux Natalie Morris Nathalie Laflamme Nekita Garcia Gravel Nicole Davenport Pascal Gauthier Pascal Gauthier Patrice Tremblav Paul McCarron Paul Rioux Peter Lineger

Peter Patterson Pierre-Henri Poudre R. Aubrev Hawton Rachael Perry Randv Bohnet Raymond Losier Rebekah Bell Rene Maheux **Richard Sprigg Rick Griffin Rick Vander Woude** Robert Loiselle Roxane Esch Rovan Gooden Samara Worth Sandra Beland Sarah Brown Sarah Predham Sara-Madeleine Hotte Sébastien Maurice Serena Menzies Serge Bilodeau Shannon Kozak Shannon Moore Sheila Perry Shelby Larsen **Shelley Linton** Shyla Locke Stacey Adey Stephanie Isaac Stéphanie Poulin Steve Kataguapit

Susan Hemstreet Suzanne McCormack Suzanne Turbis Suzie Pelletier Sylvie Philippon Tena Blake Tina Horwood Wendy Beaton William Morris



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DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY AND OTHER COMMUNITIES IN CANADA WHILE MAKING FRIENDS AND BEING CREATIVE?

Experiences Canada's Virtual Exchange program will connect you with other Canadian youth and provide you with the chance to learn more about Canada through a series of fun activities and media projects. Available to Canadian youth between the ages of 12 and 17.

WWW.EXPERIENCESCANADA.CA/VIRTUAL-EXCHANGES/



SEVEC | Visites Interprovinciales | Bilingual Exchange Secretariat

EXPERIENCES CANADA CELEBRATES 85 YEARS OF HELPING YOUNG CANADIANS EXPLORE THEIR COUNTRY IN WAYS THEY NEVER MAY HAVE IMAGINED

This year marks the 85th anniversary of Experiences Canada. Since 1936, Experiences Canada has been providing opportunities for students to exchange, explore, and experience Canada.

958

Visites Interprovinciales gains notoriety when MacLean's Magazine publishes an article about the exchange program interviewing prominent alumni families including Roland Michener, George Grant, and Kenneth Ramsay, and attributing the program to the Diefenbaker government's majority election win and breakthrough success in Quebec. A reported

1500 students from Ontario and Quebec participate in the program annually.





The organization then known as Visites Interprovinciales was founded in 1936 when James Biggar, a history teacher from Upper Canada College created a summer exchange

program for his students to live with Quebec families to further their understanding of French Canada. Over the next 50 years the organization would expand its operations to include linguistic exchange opportunities for schools across Ontario.

BEVEC Exchange.Inspire.Empower Échange.Inspire.Habilite

Visites Interprovinciales merges with the Bilingual Exchange Secretariat an Ottawa-based organization founded by prominent educator and politician Jane Dobell. Together they became known as the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada, better recognized as SEVEC.

SEVEC continues to be best known for its linguistic exchanges now offered across Canada, but also begins to broadened its focus to support cross cultural exchanges throughout Canada, to increase youth understanding of history, heritage, and the rich cultural and geographic diversity of Canada. 1986 **SEPS SEPS SEPS**

In 1986, SEVEC celebrated 50 years and twinned its 50,000 pair of youth. More than 2,500 exchange students gathered in Ottawa to celebrate the exciting milestones

2015

Experiences Canada 150&Me a new youth leadership program is confirmed as a Canada 150 signature initiative. A series of regional forums experiences CANADA

> In 2015, the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC) changed its name to Experiences Canada, a fully bilingual name that reflected its origins and core commitment to advancing opportunities for both French and English, but also reflected our continued desire to create connections for youth to our country, its diversity, its challenges and opportunities, and to each other.

> > 88 1 1

INTRODUCTION TO RECONCILIATION / INTRODUCTION A LA RÉCONCILIATION

for young people between the ages of 14 and 19, are held across Canada over a three-month period culminating in Ottawa the week of Canada Day, 2017. More than 3,900 young Canadians in a national conversation about Canada's future. Which continues today through the annual Youth Leadership Forum program.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time in its history, Experiences Canada had to cancel all planned travel and exchanges. Within five weeks of the shutdown, Experiences Canada launched its first virtual program, Online

Conversations Series on Reconciliation. This would be the first in a series of new virtual programs that continue today to support both classroom educators and independent youth study at home with easy, relevant, accessible resources for their online learning.

MEET OUR ALUMNI

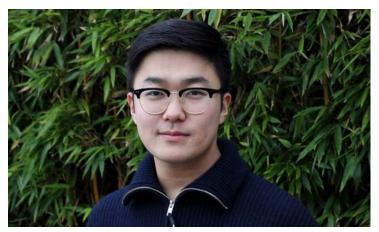
Experiences Canada is excited to connect with past participants – whether you traveled weeks, months, or years ago. You play a vital role in telling our story and inspiring youth to pursue the same opportunity to learn and see their country.

LEEJOO HWANG Alumni - Canada150&me (2017)

Juring my last year of high school, I saw an opportunity with Experiences Canada for their Canada 150&Me program. For the application, I wrote about the need for youth engagement and how our school's Local Development Club has been able to boost student engagement throughout our school with our community garden project. I traveled to Ottawa along with 150 students from all over the nation to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary.



By continuing to engage with Experiences Canada, I was able to join the Students Commission of Canada to work on Canada's very first National Youth Policy. These opportunities helped me gain a national experience by traveling to Toronto, Ottawa and various Canadian cities. I experienced new communities, became aware of new



cultures, and formed new friendships. I got to learn about the World Youth Forum (WYF) during one conference recommended to me by a friend. The WYF became an opportunity to network and share ideas with youth leaders from all over the world, with costs covered by the Egyptian government. My youth advocacy work in Canada gave me the confidence to apply.



MY EXPERIENCES FROM THE CANADA 150GME SPARKED AN APPETITE IN ME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DIFFERENT CULTURES AND DEVELOP NEW Relationships around canada and across the World.



Canada 150&Me sparked an appetite in me to learn more about different cultures and develop new relationships around Canada and across the world. By continuing to pursue my passion in sustainability and taking on new opportunities to grow, it has helped me become a strong networker and make friends all over the world. I look forward to visiting friends from the World Youth Forum and perhaps potentially working on social ventures with them to solve local issues.

vedanshi vala

Alumni - Youth Leadership Forum on Diversity & Inclusion (2019)

When I attended Experiences Canada's National Youth Forum on Diversity and Inclusion, I was awestruck by the resilient and inspiring young leaders across the country. Throughout the Forum, my fellow delegates and I had numerous opportunities to engage in conversations around topics highly relevant to the social, economic, and political landscape of today's world. It was a week filled with learning, sharing, and connecting, but perhaps most importantly, with listening.

THE WEEK IN TORONTO AT THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FORUM Changed How I participate in challenging conversations and continue to advocate for a better world for everyone.

Too often, the voices of those who face adversity are silenced. Too often, society is quick to judge a person based on their outward labels, be it their ethnicity, their sexual orientation, their religion, their gender, or any other such way that an individual's sense of self is formed.



I learned about how misconstrued these prejudices can be, and how harmful this type of uneducated judgment is for an individual's growth, journey, and self-image. In the face of these daily challenges, I was humbled to witness people my age challenging these social norms, fighting for a world of equity.



To me, empowering everyone starts at a basic and fundamental requirement for personal safety. I firmly believe that without knowing that one is safe, one's full potential cannot be achieved. In an effort to make our homes, schools, workplaces, and communities safer, I cofounded BOLT Safety Society, a federally registered notfor-profit operated by youth volunteers. Our organization created a free mobile platform that gives members access to self-defense tutorials and information on nearby safe spaces (through our 'Safe Hubs' initiative to fight against domestic abuse), among other features.

The week in Toronto at the Diversity and Inclusion Forum changed how I participate in challenging conversations and continue to advocate for a better world for everyone.





ROBERT WARZEL

Alumni - Reciprocal language exchange (2007)



y first encounter with Experiences Canada (then SEVEC) was early 2007, on a reciprocal language exchange between Langley, BC and St-Hyacinthe, QC. I was a French immersion student through high school, so the immediate and obvious benefit was the opportunity to develop and improve my language skills. But I didn't expect to learn as much about my community and country as I did. And I think the biggest takeaway for me was a love of travel.

Shortly after my exchange, I joined the YAC in mid-2007, and went to Ottawa for the first time. I returned the following year during my senior year of high school, and ultimately moved to Ottawa to attend Carleton University the following summer. While completing my degree, I spent 4 or 5 years working with Experiences Canada to help expand and improve the Youth Advisory Committee. I took on a "mentor" role, and would help plan the YAC program and activities, and spend 2 or 3 days helping lead the YAC through and around Ottawa when they were in town.



One of my favourite memories from my time with Experiences Canada were the friendships I made, and still try to maintain despite living in a different country now. I've had the fortune of traveling through every province but one (I still need to go through the territories too!) and I am rarely far from a friend anywhere in Canada now. I also got to lobby on Parliament, meet Justin Trudeau, tour some of Canada's most historically relevant buildings, and try all sorts of new things.

BRINGING YOUTH TOGETHER.. FOSTERS CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS, AND ULTIMATELY HELPS CREATE A LITTLE MORE UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE

Overall, I think my favorite memory is when I was hosting my exchange twin. My exchange twin was a huge hockey fan but had never been to an NHL game before. While he was in town, we happened to have tickets, and so we took him to the Vancouver Canucks game. The game was pretty close, and part-way through the game he said, "I hope it goes to a shootout!" (The shootout was a new thing for hockey back then, it had only been around for one or two seasons and was still a novel experience). Sure enough, the game ended tied, and the Canucks ultimately won in the shootout. For someone who enjoys hockey as much as he did, that was a special experience.

I think opportunities for youth to experience the diversity of Canada is more important than ever. Society has a confirmation bias problem. Globalization (and social media) was supposed to expose us to other peoples, new ways of living life, and connect us with the globe, but instead we've isolated ourselves and surrounded ourselves with those who support our preconceived notions. Bringing youth together, whether it's an exchange or forum, in-person or virtual, helps combat those societal forces. It instills lessons that will remain with kids for the rest of their lives, fosters cross-cultural connections, and ultimately helps create a little more understanding and acceptance of the differences we all have from one another.



ONLINE CONVERSATIONS

For 85 years, Experiences Canada has been helping young people to explore their country in ways they never may have imagined. With the pandemic, for the first time in our history, travel is not possible. Adapting to this reality, we started Online Conversations - A series of webinars, educational resources, and youth challenges on topics relevant to today's youth.

These series aim to maintain youth interest and awareness in current affairs as well as support secondary school educators who are looking for innovative ways to support their online learning plans.

Every webinar is archived and available free on our website at: https://experiencescanada.ca/online-conversations/





RECONCILIATION CONVERSATIONS

Reconciliation means different things to different people, understanding the breadth of perspectives is an important first step in fostering more meaningful dialogue.

Experiences Canada collaborated with Indigenous leaders, artists, lawyers, journalists, and land and water defenders to bring you Five live online events. The speakers in this series generously offered their time and knowledge to engage youth in a dialogue on the contemporary issues and challenges that Indigenous people face. Our aim is to encourage conversation and inquiry among Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

RECONCILIATION CONVERSATIONS WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS



INTRODUCTION TO RECONCILIATION

Our introduction to Reconciliation will inform about the treaty rights and obligations that were agreed upon, the historic injustices that have affected Indigenous populations over the past century and a half, and some of the priority themes related to Reconciliation today. Speakers: Perry Bellegarde, Max Fine Day, and Crystal Martin-Lapenskie.

ONLINE CONVERSATIONS

RECONCILIATION CONVERSATIONS WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Language is critical to sharing traditional knowledge, family and community history, and cultural worldview. Sadly, years of colonial systems and structures, most notably the imposition of Residential Schools, severed these connections, meaning that for many generations, knowledge and understanding about their communities and their cultural identities was lost

Speakers: Susan Aglukark, Zoey Roy, and Sage Paul.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

The underlying issues for the health crises facing Indigenous communities are well documented: unsafe drinking water; lack of adequate housing and affordable food supplies; lack of adequate health care and emergency services; lower income levels and lack of access to education and economic opportunity.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE / LANGUE ET CULTURE

writer / Auteure-Compositrice-Interprète

watch webinar highlights

Speakers: Pam Palmater, and Michael Redhead Champagne

ENVIRONMENT AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAND

Industrial development over the past century and a half has negatively impacted the quality of the environment through pollutants, contaminants, urbanization. Large scale industrial projects such as the construction of pipelines, forestry, and water waste management have often led to conflicts with Indigenous communities concerned over the potential long-term degradation to the natural resources and their traditional ways of life.

Speakers: Geoff Green, Larissa Crawford, and Kluane Adamek.





EDUCATION & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Better education is the cornerstone for a stronger path forward for everyone: fueling understanding and awareness; and providing greater opportunities for economic well-being. Indigenous people are the fastest growing population in Canada. Investing in their future economic outcomes will strengthen prosperity and sustainability for all of Canada. Speakers: Arlen Dumas, and Autumn Larose-Smith.

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WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

"The webinar you put on the other day was outstanding.

"I Liked the variety of guests, the opportunity for interaction with the audience, and the Zoom platform and Facebook Live that enabled people far and wide to participate"

"Very informative. Helped with the gaps of knowledge I had with the Reconciliation progress in Canada."

"I felt that Susan Aglukark and Zoey Roy were eloquent speakers. They were able to speak about their perspective as First Nations women and address struggles that helped them on their journey. They were humble and kind, informative and truth speakers."

THE PRESENTERS WERE FUN AND ENGAGING AND THE INFORMATION THEY SHARED IS SO HELPFUL.

"Thank-you for educating us non-Indigenious Educational Assistants! I live between two reserves in southern Alberta and this is so important for me. We have so many children coming to our schools. I feel so cheated in my education from SW Saskatchewan, not knowing about the Indigenious culture and what really happened. Now is a time to begin the journey of conversations of the truth and us living together as one. There is too much White privilege in this area. People need to be educated and corrected. Thank-you for all you are doing."

RECONCILIATION AMBASSADORS

Reconciliation Ambassadors are a group of dedicated young people who have been selected to act as hosts, mediators, videographers and social-media managers for Reconciliation Conversations. By offering their experience, knowledge, and support skills to the webinar series, the Reconciliation Ambassadors are ensuring that youth are engaged, informed, and protected as they participate in meaningful conversations on Reconciliation.

THE KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, AND SKILLS THAT FLOURISHED IN ME THROUGH THIS WORK IS IRREPLACEABLE

66



clockwise from left : William Fayant, Cassandra De Freitas, Jonathan Plank, Paige Kasokeo, Thawany Monteiro, Nicole Tornquist, Katherine Koskie.

"Being a Reconciliation Ambassador gave me the opportunity to collaborate with other youth across Canada. I was grateful to learn from Indigenous speakers, and had the opportunity to reach out to knowledge keepers in my own community to learn about local history and cultural traditions." - Katherine Koskie

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"Being a reconciliation ambassador allowed me to work and learn alongside other youth leaders, experts, youth, and staff.. It's something I would encourage other youth to take part in!" - Cassandra DeFreitas

WWW. EXPERIENCESCANADA.CA/RECONCILIATION-CONVERSATIONS/

RECONCILIATION AMBASSADORS



ABOUT RECIPROCAL EXCHANGES

Experiences Canada has offered reciprocal youth exchanges in Canada since 1936!

Every year, participating schools and youth organizations send 10-30 youth (ages 12- 17) on exchange somewhere in Canada. In an average year, 5,000 youth and their chaperones are chosen, representing just under 200 groups. That's hundreds of thousands of young Canadians who have benefited from a student exchange experience since we began over 80 years ago. But we know we could travel a lot more. In any given year, we receive 30-40% more applications than we can provide funding for!

We offer opportunities for young Canadians to explore their country in ways they may never have imagined. For many, these experiences may be the first time youth have traveled without their family, and more often the first time they have visited another province or territory within Canada.

BENEFITS OF STUDENT EXCHANGE:

- Strengthens second language skills & academics.
- Improves cultural awareness and understanding of Canada.
- Increases empathy, inclusion and reduces social barriers.
- Develops leadership skills and critical thinking.
- Forges new friendships and connections.
- Builds self-confidence, independence, and maturity.
- Creates FUN memories that last a lifetime!

Experiences Canada offers many types of exchanges including Cultural, Sports, Indigenous, Immigration & Diversity, Human Rights, and Linguistic. More are in development all the time.



2019-2020 EXCHANGES

92 EXCHANGE GROUPS 2025 YOUTH 10 PROVINCES & TERRITORIES

1000^s OF LIVES CHANGED

NORTHWEST

Canada



BRITISH COLUMBIA

BY JADA BAPTISTE, MOTHER TERESA HIGH SCHOOL, OTTAWA, ON.

My experience in Victoria with our varsity basketball team was extraordinary. While our time in Victoria, there was never a dull moment. I had the opportunity to experience so many things with my team, and these opportunities will inspire me for a lifetime.

The trip was so amazing that I can't quite pin point my best memories while over there; however, there were several experiences that I'll never forget. My first experience is going on the hike of Mount Douglas or now reclaimed as The summit of Pkols. The environment that we were surrounding by on this hike was absolutely breathtaking, looking up to notice that I was surrounded by gigantic trees that have been in Canada for centuries. Made me feel a little closer to this beautiful country, I call home. As we hiked our way to the top of the summit we were lucky enough to be blessed with the beautiful view of certain areas of Victoria. After, the hike, I knew that I would now always have a different appreciation for the nature throughout our country.

The first night, I met my twin it was awkward, even though we had talked to one another for about a month earlier. Even though that first night was awkward I had never felt more comfortable in a surrounding then with my host family because they all carried an aura of



kindness. My host family made me feel welcome very quickly. They always treated me like a family member rather than a guest; they included me in their family activities and daily lives. As the week went by, my connection grew with my host family as my comfort level went up. I don't quite have word to describe how fantastic my host family was; however, by the end of my stay it did not feel like I was leaving new friends, it felt like I was leaving family.

THE IMPACT OF THIS EXPERIENCE IS THE ABILITY TO MAKE LIFETIME CONNECTIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO YOU HAVE NEVER MET BEFORE.



Victoria, British Columbia is a beautiful city with beautiful humans and on our last full day there, my basketball team really experienced this. We had the opportunity to bond with our twin teammates and just explore their city. We got to see the city they call home and what they love to do there. Throughout the day I noticed just how open minded each girl on our twin team was because they had all accepted us with open arms regardless of all of our differences. The Oak Bay Basketball girls are truly individuals who made our experience one of a lifetime.

The impact of this experience is the ability to make lifetime connections with individuals who you would have never met before. I can say each one of my teammates made a connection with someone across our country who they did not know even existed. I know that the connection I made with my twin is one that I will remember forever. Experience Canada allows Canadian youth to establish connections and I absolutely love the idea of being connected and knowing the importance of human connection to each other.

I would 100% recommended this experience to other youth. It allows people to see our country from different perspectives. We build connections of a lifetime with other youth in our very own country. My only advice is to stay open-minded and present throughout the time of your exchange because then you can truly experience these life-changing opportunities.









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EXCHANGE PHOTOS - BRITISH COLUMBIA























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EXCHANGE PHOTOS - BRITISH COLUMBIA

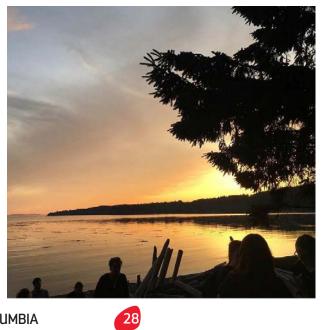














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PRAIRIES

BY PAIGE LEITCH, ATHENS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL, ATHENS, ON

My trip to Sylvan Lake, Alberta really was not one to forget. I met so many new, great people as well as saw so much beauty in nature that I would never be able to see in my home province of Ontario.



It's such an interesting experience living with "A stranger" for a week, even though they quickly turn into a friend.



My favourite part of the trip was hands down going to Banff and seeing the mountains up close, especially Lake Minnewanka. This day was followed closely by going to a Calgary Flames game. The atmosphere in that arena was something to remember, and we scored an



upgrade to better seats to make the night even better.

I was really surprised at how easy it was to settle into my twin's home, it almost felt like the real thing back home. It's such an interesting experience living with "a stranger" for a week, even though they quickly turn into a friend.

I would totally recommend going on an exchange to anyone who loves trying new things and is interested in seeing the beauty of their own country, and how it varies so much province to province.

















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We care about our community.

At WestJet, we're always looking for ways to enrich the lives of everyone in our world. We're passionate about giving back in the communities where we live and work.

As a proud partner of Experiences Canada, we're committed to helping youth explore our country, connect with others across Canada and start shaping the future of tomorrow.



ONTARIO

BY HAZEL BROOKS, LARCH HILLS JR SKI TEAM, SALMON ARM, BC

I live in Salmon Arm, a small city in British Columbia with only 17,00 people. Going on a ski exchange to a big city like Ottawa was a really great way to experience other parts of our country. It was interesting that even though we lived across the country from each other, my exchange twin and me actually had a lot in common.

> IT WAS INTERESTING THAT EVEN THOUGH WE LIVED ACROSS THE COUNTRY FROM EACH OTHER, MY EXCHANGE TWIN AND ME ACTUALLY HAD A LOT IN COMMON.

To me, this exchange gave me lifelong friendships and heartwarming memories. One of the best memories I have of our trip was when we were split into groups to do different challenges. I loved doing the cooking challenge because not only was it an exciting competition, but it was also a great opportunity to form connections with other kids on the exchange.

I also loved getting to explore the community by doing things like skating on the canal, skiing at the SJAM, visiting the Canadian Museum of Nature, and so much more. I loved getting to know everyone through our experiences together.

I think the most memorable part of the trip for me was the friendships I made with the skiers from across the country. Being able to bond with them while exploring the different cultures was what made the trip so unforgettable for me.









EXCHANGE STORIES - ONTARIO





























EXCHANGE PHOTOS - ONTARIO



EXCHANGE PHOTOS - ONTARIO

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QUEBEC

BY BRYSON NERYSOO, CHIEF JULIUS SCHOOL. FORT MCPHERSON, NWT

When my teacher was telling my class that we would go on exchange I was so excited to be traveling from Fort McPherson, NWT to Kanehsatà:ke, Quebec. I knew that it would be a new experience to learn about another indigenous group all across Canada. At the beginning of the exchange, it was quite different meeting new students from the other side of Canada. I was nervous but over a little time I got to know the students and became friends with all of them. I never thought that I was going to have this kind of an experience, especially getting to see the other side of Canada, which was a completely new experience for myself.

> I NEVER THOUGHT THAT I WAS GOING TO HAVE THIS KIND OF AN EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY GETTING TO SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF CANADA,

When we arrived in Kanehsatà:ke we got to see the area they live in which was very beautiful. Throughout the week we were taught the Mohawk language and how to play lacrosse. We learned about the Oka crisis which was quite terrible. They even brought us to indoor surfing and a virtual reality place. We also saw the city of Montreal. We saw St. Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal, which was amazing inside.



We saw some great things we won't forget about. I never thought I would be able to experience any of this. I can say that this trip was a great experience and hope that I can do this again sometime in the future. I also hope others will get to experience what I did. It was so thrilling to do this exchange. I would recommend this for others to do and have as much fun as I did.

























EXCHANGE PHOTOS - QUEBEC







EXCHANGE PHOTOS - QUEBEC

ATLANTIC CANADA

BY AVA GIGGS, 1ST COCHRANE PATHFINDERS (GIRL GUIDES), REDWOOD MEADOWS, AB

What an amazing experience this was! I just finished an exchange program with my Pathfinders group (Girl Guides of Canada). I live in Cochrane, Alberta and we were paired with a group in St. John's, Newfoundland.

As soon as we arrived in St John's, we were introduced to our host family and taken home to get settled in. From the beginning, I was treated like part of the family - that helped a lot being in a stranger's home so far away. My exchange twin, Katie, and I got along great and our friendship was so natural. That night we had a small gathering with another exchange family. It was nice to have a relaxed night before the activities started.



OVERALL I DON'T HAVE ONE FAVOURITE MEMORY, IT WAS A COMBINATION OF BEING A PART OF A NEW FAMILY, BUILDING LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS AND BEING ABLE TO VISIT A NEW PLACE IN CANADA.

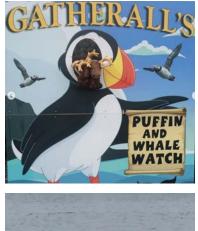
At first it was different coming from a place where I see mountains every day to seeing ocean views everywhere I looked. We are so lucky to call these places home, they are both so beautiful! The climate was also very different from what I am used to. I went from the dry air in Alberta to the humid air in Newfoundland. Although it was raining when we landed, we had great weather throughout the



trip with just a little rain. It was way warmer than we expected it to be!

In Newfoundland we did so many fun activities. We walked all the stairs up Signal Hill, hiked the East Coast Trail, visited museums and aquariums and toured downtown St. Johns and even saw the famous Jelly Bean street. We shopped, were treated to local food and were hosted with a traditional

kitchen party complete with Jigs dinner and kissing a cod fish. I was even lucky enough to be taken to a beach to see an iceberg passing through. Out of all the amazing things we did my favourite activity was going on a boat tour to see puffins and whales. We spotted 3 different kinds, baleen whales, minke whales and a humpback who breached right in front of us. I really enjoyed my





time in Newfoundland, sightseeing and experiencing their province while learning about their new history as well as the different wildlife species they have.

After all the planning and excitement, this whole trip went by so fast. Katie wasn't the only friendship formed, I feel like I have so many new friends and we all plan on staying in touch for many years to come. The day we had to go back to the airport, there was a lot of hugs, tears and hard goodbyes. We really were just one big family and it happened so fast.

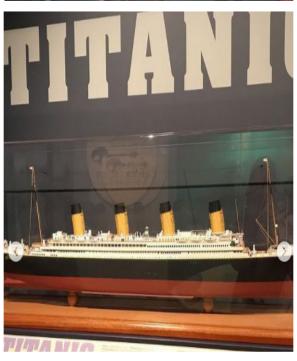
Overall I don't have one favourite memory, it was a combination of being a part of a new family, building lifelong friendships and being able to visit a new place in Canada. I already can't wait to visit Newfoundland again and can hopefully go with my own family because no one else has been to the east coast of Canada. I will remember this trip forever, thank you Experiences Canada for helping to make it happen!



EXCHANGE STORIES - ATLANTIC CANADA















EXCHANGE PHOTOS - ATLANTIC CANADA











EXCHANGE PHOTOS - ATLANTIC CANADA









EXCHANGE PHOTOS - ATLANTIC CANADA







THE NORTH

BY BRYSON NERYSOO, CHIEF JULIUS SCHOOL. FORT MCPHERSON, NWT

The students from Ratihente were very fun to be friends with and I had a great time with them. The students from my school showed the students from Ratihente our community (Fort McPherson, NWT) and all the traditional things we do.

We played sports like basketball and other activities. We had a community supper to welcome the students. As we showed them the town and the people, they had a great time. Some of the students were emotional to say goodbye for a short while until we saw them again in their community.





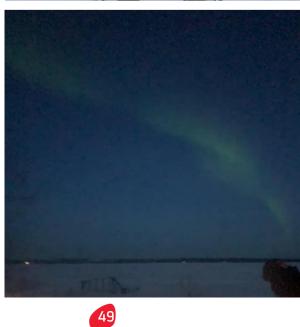




EXCHANGE PHOTOS - THE NORTH









A daughter traveled from British Columbia to Ottawa as part of an exchange between the Nakkertok ski program and the Larch Hills ski program in Salmon arm British Columbia. She had an amazing experience. She is still in touch with her exchange partner and is mailing her Christmas card as we write this message.

In my daughters words:

This exchange was one of, if not the best experience of my life. I got to know so many awesome people and love that I can still be in touch with many of them. Ill never forget all the amazing memories I made.

- Tom Wallace

WE NOTICED THAT BOTH OF THEM SEEMED TO BE A BIT MORE GROWN UP WHEN THEY RETURNED.

My daughter traveled to BC last December as part of the exchange between her ski club Nakkertok Nordic and Larch Hills in Salmon Arm. It was a fabulous experience for her. Her twin came here in February and since then they have remained very good friends. She hopes they can meet in the future when traveling becomes more normal again.

Thank you Experiences Canada!!

Thank you for all everything that Experiences Canada did to make it possible for Jabin and Tianna to go on the Youth Exchange. It was a very rich and rewarding experience for both of them and they have wonderful memories of both their time in Ottawa and their time with their partners in SK. It was an excellent experience for them to live with another family and learn to navigate social cues on their own. We noticed that both of them seemed to be a bit more grown up when they returned.

Jabin's testimony: I loved skiing along the river and skating on the canal. It was great to meet new people.

Tianna's: I loved making new friends in other provinces and staying in other people's homes.



experiences S FORUMS CANADA RÉCONCILIATION

REGISTER TODAY FOR THE CHANCE TO ATTEND THIS FUN, ENGAGING, AND TRULY INTERACTIVE ONLINE EXPERIENCE.

70 youth between the ages of 14-18 will be selected for a five-day interactive program where youth will have the opportunity to build their own Reconciliation projects, guided by community leaders.

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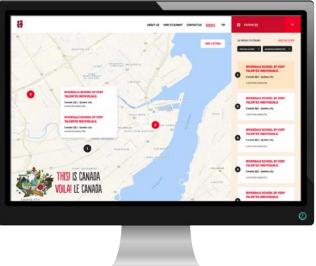
With the pandemic now into its second wave, and ongoing uncertainty about when it will be safe to travel again, Experiences Canada continues to innovate to find ways to connect youth together when so much is keeping them apart. As students & educators increasingly express concern about the isolating impact of online learning, finding ways to use these technologies to bring Canadian youth together in fun, engaging ways has never been more important.



THIS! IS CANADA - A NEW VIRTUAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM!

THIS! is Canada/VOILÀ! Le Canada a new virtual exchange program will be launched in January 2021. Built on the advice and recommendations of over 500 parents and teachers surveyed about alternative programming during the pandemic, this unique project inspires youth to share stories, photographs, and videos about the people, history, culture and daily life that define their communities. Youth are guided through a series of projects that they share with each other, and which allow them to "put their community on the map", - an Interactive Map of Canada to be unveiled at the end of the school year.

A lot of our alumni schools and youth groups have responded positively to the development of this virtual option for two reasons: to provide an exchange opportunity when in-person exchanges are never possible, and as a pre-exchange tool to help groups get acquainted for those who do choose to travel. It's also the first time where we've been able to offer exchange opportunities for individual youth.



WHATS' NEXT?



this! is canada virtual choir:

Our This! Is Canada/Voila! Le Canada project will also include the formation of a first national Virtual Youth Choir. So many arts activities have been canceled during the pandemic, this three month long program will offer weekly choir practices via zoom, and a monthly hangout session to learn more about the music industry. Youth will work on four contemporary music pieces, recording and submitting their individual voice tracks for a music video mix that will be launched on YouTube at the end of the school year. The program is open to any youth ages 12-18 who loves to sing regardless of choir experience or ability.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM ON RECONCILIATION

Finally, our planned Youth Leadership Forum on Reconciliation has been redesigned as a Virtual Event. Still to be held the week of July 5-9th 2021, this week will offer 70 Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth the opportunity to think more intentionally about how they can address some of the challenges and priorities for Reconciliation. Youth will particpate in short plenary presentations at the beginning of each day then work in smaller groups to build funderready project proposals on ideas that the youth develop together. Youth participants will gain more knowledge and information about Reconciliation and how they can be stronger advocates and allies. The program will also help them to develop practical skills and experience in project development, proposal writing, and communications and outreach.





YOUTH LEAD PROGRAMMING:

In every step of our programming shift's, we've enlisted the help of teams of youth volunteers to help guide project development, contribute content, and animate the conversations for younger participants. It's opened up a whole new way of thinking about how we can meaningfully involve older youth and create spaces for our alumni to contribute to our programming. It's one aspect of the pandemic we intend to hang onto once the virus has been defeated.

Experiences Canada's vision is that every child in Canada should have the opportunity to learn, firsthand, about another part of the country and its people.

WHATS' NEXT?



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experiences

At a time when so much is keeping us apart, you can bring us together!

Every youth deserves a chance to participate in our programs but we need your help to make this happen. Your donation will help youth who may not be able to participate without additional financial support and resources.

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Building bright futures through lifelong learning

Together, we can do more for Canadians, for each other and for the communities we love.



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