



## **National Youth Service program receives renewed funding** **Katimavik is a good investment in these difficult economic times**

**Montréal, December 20th, 2008** – The federal government has approved Katimavik's funding for another program year until the fall of 2010.

"We are pleased to have received confirmation that our funding has been renewed," says Jean-Guy Bigeau, Katimavik's Executive Director. "We have been working very hard to communicate to the government the fact that engaging youth in full time volunteer service is good for the economy, our youth and for the hundreds of communities we serve. We are grateful that the federal government, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, has extended our funding thus recognizing the impact of the Katimavik program and the benefits it provides for communities, non-profit organizations as well as for youth all across Canada," Bigeau said.

For over 30 years now, Katimavik has reached out to communities across Canada with full time volunteers willing and able to make a difference. In 2008 alone the participants contributed 667,730 hours of volunteer work valued at 11,150,000\$.

"Now that we have the affirmation of our funding for the 2009-10 program year, Katimavik will be able to accept the many applications that were on hold. More youth will be able to make a significant contribution to local communities and participate in nation-building. We look forward to working with the government this year in order to respond to the increased demand for the program and reinforce our efforts towards a multi-year funding agreement. Our goal is to increase our capacity so that we can provide a greater number of youth with this unique opportunity to engage in full time national volunteer service," stated Robert Giroux, President of the Board of Directors.

In these difficult economic times, youth will certainly be affected. The socio-economic impact of the Katimavik program cannot be understated. In a changing society facing many challenges, volunteers are helping bind Canada together. On an annual basis, this program provides nearly 700 community based organizations across the country with over one thousand full time volunteers in support of meaningful community-based projects. In fact, each Katimavik participant works an average of 900 hours for local organizations that provide important and essential services in the areas of health, education, the environment and poverty reduction.

In turn, the hundreds of young men and women from across Canada who participate in Katimavik are provided with structured learning and professional development opportunities. The combination of serving three distinct Canadian communities with a structured learning program helps shape young people who become more civically engaged, socially responsible and well equipped to meet the challenges of the future.

"Until today's announcement, Katimavik has been unable to begin recruitment for the next program year due to the imposed moratorium and the uncertainty surrounding the program's future. While the decision to renew next year's funding is welcomed, a multi-year funding plan is required in order to provide the means to implement both program and funding diversification strategies," added Jean-Guy Bigeau. "There are opportunities for strategic partnerships that can and should be pursued; however, it requires time and a long term commitment from the federal government is essential," he concluded

For further information on Katimavik please visit [www.katimavik.org](http://www.katimavik.org)

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## **About Katimavik**

During their nine-month service experience, participants aged 17 to 21, live in three Canadian communities, where they volunteer 35 hours a week for a variety of non-profit host organizations. Everyday life consists of living with ten other young people from across the country, along with a project leader. The staff member provides supervision and facilitates the implementation of structured learning programs through a series of workshops and activities pertaining to leadership skills development, learning our official languages, environmental stewardship, experiencing cultural diversity and integration first-hand, as well as adopting a healthier lifestyle. The intent of the program is to shape responsible citizens while contributing significantly to the social and economic development of Canadian communities.

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