



For Immediate Release

A LIFE-ALTERING EXPERIENCE IN 900 HOURS!

LEADING YOUTH SERVICE PROGRAM KICKS OFF NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK WITH A CALL TO ACTION FOR YOUNG CANADIANS

Toronto, April 11, 2007 – Which Canadian youth contributes 900 hours and an equivalent of \$12,972¹ each to Canadian communities every year? Katimavik participants lead the way in the number of hours spent volunteering and the economic return they represent. With national volunteer week in April, Katimavik marks the importance of volunteer youth service in Canada by officially inviting young Canadians aged 17 to 21 to experience an unparalleled growth opportunity. As Canada's leading national youth service program, Katimavik offers young Canadians a chance to embark on an exciting nine-month journey of self-discovery and the opportunity to gain valuable life and work skills through volunteering.

A recent Ekos survey sponsored by Katimavik confirms that Canadians hold largely favourable views on volunteerism. Over three quarters (76%) of Canadians agree that increased use of the voluntary sector is a positive way of expanding citizen involvement. "Throughout the 30 years of Katimavik, we have seen that Canadians really do value the concept of giving back to the community while learning from their experience. Volunteering should be a part of everyone's life, including young Canadians, who are at a point in their lives where they are learning about themselves while facing important life decisions. Volunteering in different sectors of activity permits youth to explore opportunities while leaving a positive footprint in communities across the country," says Jean-Guy Bigeau, executive director of Katimavik.

Canadian youths between the ages of 17 and 21 are invited to participate in Canada's premier national youth service program that benefits their personal, social and professional development, in addition to being involved in community betterment projects. For nine months, participants experience working and living as part of a group in three different communities across the country with 10 other young people their age. The starting dates for the 2007-2008 program are in September 2007 (nine-month program) and January 2008 (eight-month program) and the deadline date for applications is May 31st for the September intake and August 31st for the January intake.

Katimavik Fast Facts:

- Katimavik has provided over **27,000** young Canadians between the ages of 17 and 21 with a positive and diversified volunteer work experience for **30** years.
- Each dollar spent by the Katimavik program generates a return of **\$2.20** in every community that works with the participants. This represents a total economic return of **\$17,262,000²**.
- During their **34** weeks of volunteer work in the program, the **915** participants contribute the equivalent of **823,500** in volunteer work hours to communities across Canada.
- The 823,500 volunteer work hours is valued at **\$11,870,000** according to the average wage in the volunteer sector.
- A Katimavik project in a Canadian community will bring approximately **\$73,000** to the host community. In 2006-2007, Katimavik is present in 87 communities.

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- Providing English-speaking participants with an experience in a francophone community gives them an outlook that they might never have had if it were not for the Katimavik program. This fosters an understanding and respect for both official languages, as well as the potential to learn French as a second language.
- The Katimavik program integrates participants to three different communities. After completing the program, participants have a better understanding of the cultural and regional diversity of Canada.

More about Katimavik

Since 1977, more than 27,000 young Canadians have participated in the Katimavik program, developing their sense of civic responsibility and gaining self-confidence. Katimavik's goal is to form responsible citizens who will contribute significantly to Canadian society.

DOING. LEARNING. BUILDING A NATION... ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME.

1. *According to the average wage in the volunteer sector – Stats Canada.*
2. *Malatest social and economic impact study, 2006.*

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

- Katimavik spokespeople are available across Canada for interviews to speak about their Katimavik experiences.
- Executive director Jean Guy Bigeau is also available for interviews to speak about Katimavik's position as Canada's leading youth service program and the importance of a national youth service policy.

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