

## Experiences Canada offers young Canadians unprecedented opportunity to shape Canada's Future



Ottawa, March 15, 2016 –Experiences Canada today announced a new youth-led initiative to commemorate Canada's sesquicentennial year. **Canada 150+Me** will create a unique multi-destination youth event and series of regional forums for young people between the ages of 14-19, to be held across Canada over a three-month period culminating in Ottawa the week before Canada Day. The **Canada 150+Me** project will involve thousands of young Canadians in a conversation about Canada's future, encouraging young people to take a leadership role in celebrating Canada's 150th birthday.

"In as much as Canada's Centennial was defined by one generation of Canadians, our goal is to ensure Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> belongs to this next generation," explained Deborah Morrison, president and CEO of Experiences Canada. "We want them to honour the past, but also engage in the present and think about the future. We'll ask individual youth to tell us about the greatest challenges or opportunities facing Canada for their generation, using whatever medium they choose, and then group them together with other like-minded people for an unforgettable week of community action, mentorship and inspiration about the causes they care most about."

The project plans to involve potentially thousands of youth in the dialogue both online and onsite at these regional events. A leadership group of 150 youth will then be chosen from the regional events to represent their views at a national forum in Ottawa in the days leading up to Canada Day.



The Department of Canadian Heritage confirmed its support of \$700,000 toward the \$1.5 million dollar initiative through the Canada 150 Fund - Signature Initiatives. Minister Mélanie Joly made the announcement at the Discovery Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia this morning. "I invite young Canadians to participate in the Experiences Canada exchange project. It will allow them to discover new communities or explore this country's regional history, heritage, arts and culture. Young people are the future of our country, and they are at the heart of the celebrations for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation."

Other confirmed partners in the program include Great-West Life London Life and Canada Life, Canada's Immigration Museum at Pier 21, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Experiences Canada will release further details about the program and how youth can apply in May 2016.

#### **About the Project:**

Canada 150+Me will present a set of 4 Regional Forums and exchanges will be held in communities across Canada in April and May of 2017. The topics covered at each Forum will vary from place to place, allowing for a more in-depth focus and discussion on the key themes as identified by our youth. These themes may include: Environment; Human Rights; Relationship with Indigenous Communities; Canada's Place in the World; Immigration, Diversity and Canadian Identity; Education and Innovation. The project will culminate with a leadership group of 150 students, representing all of the regional forums, travelling to Ottawa from **June 27-July 2, 2017** to present their findings to government, business, and community leaders and to participate as volunteers throughout the week in Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

#### **About Experiences Canada**

Experiences Canada (formerly SEVEC) is a national charitable organization and a leading provider of youth travel and exchange opportunities in Canada. Through its flagship program, which is generously supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage, thousands of young Canadians deepen their understanding of Canada's history, geography, linguistic, cultural, and social diversity. Experiences Canada seeks to strengthen young Canadians' connection and commitment to their communities and their country, and in so doing, better prepare them to become the active citizens and global leaders we need them to be.