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For immediate release



Yukon's DreamCatcher Mentoring Program – Meeting with PM Harper

Whitehorse, Yukon – Local representatives of DreamCatcher Mentoring (DCM) – an innovative on line mentoring program designed to engage northern students to stay in school – met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Whitehorse on Thursday to celebrate the program's successes and discuss its opportunities and strategies moving forward.

The round table session also included newly-appointed Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Minister John Duncan, Health Canada Minister Leona Aglukkaq, Yukon Senator Dan Lang and students and teachers who have participated in the DCM program.

“Prime Minister Harper expressed a keen interest in DreamCatcher Mentoring and sees great value in helping northern students gain confidence and skills through our high quality one-to-one career mentoring program,” said program founder and Executive Director Josh Silvertown.

“We shared our many successes and challenges with him and appreciate his support as we work toward solutions to increase graduation statistics among Yukon and Nunavut high school students and help set our youth on a path to success.”

Created in response to the increasing number of students dropping out of high school in the north, DCM is a Canadian leadership and e-mentoring program that connects northern youth with Canadian mentors in their career area of choice.

The program incorporates indigenous tradition and northern values and allows students to help realize their educational goals and aspirations. In its seventh year, DCM has successfully matched over 600 students with Canadian professionals around the world.

“We have created a unique strategy to bridge the educational, cultural, communication and geographic gaps in Canada by connecting Yukon and Nunavut high school students with Canadian mentors who work in their aspired 'dream careers' around the country and around the world,” said program co-founder and Vice President Beverly Sembsmoen.

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Backgrounder – DreamCatcher Mentoring

The Premise:

DreamCatcher Mentoring (DCM) was developed in response to the declining number of students that enter and graduate high school in northern Canada compared to the rest of the country. DCM founders believe that an empowering, one-to-one mentoring program gives students the confidence, skills and drive to create attainable goals, complete their education and work toward their dreams and aspirations.

The Program:

DCM provides northern youth with an opportunity to partake in one-to-one career counselling and exploration with a Canadian mentor employed in the student's aspired career field. Recognizing the importance of indigenous tradition and northern values, DCM also encourages students to take steps locally to realize their educational and career goals.

The Format:

In an effort to provide northern youth with access to a diverse group of mentors, regardless of their geographical location, DCM has developed an innovative form of on line mentorship. E-mentoring allows students to interact with their mentors through a secure on line environment.

The Role of the Student

Enrolled students are asked to provide DCM with a list of their top three career/job aspirations. Based on this information, students are then paired up with a suitable mentor with whom they will engage in on line dialogue for the extent of their participation in the program. Students will also be given a chance to explore local opportunities by participating in a day-long job shadow at a workplace relevant to the student's career choice.

The Role of the Mentor

DCM mentors are Canadian professionals who volunteer their time to help northern youth explore their career interests. Mentors are expected to provide students with insight and guidance into their own careers and share the knowledge attained through their experience to introduce the many opportunities available within the student's area of interest. Once a relationship between student and mentor has been developed, they then work together to identify the student's goals and develop a plan toward achieving them.

DCM History

DCM officially launched in 2005 in Carcross, Yukon – a small town of just 400 people. For one month, the project matched 14 students in Grades 7 to 9 with 14 Canadian professionals eager to help northern youth identify school and career objectives. In 2009, high school students in Iqaluit, Nunavut joined the program along with students from across Yukon. 125 students representing seven schools in Yukon and Nunavut participated. Since 2005, DCM has matched over 600 Yukon and Nunavut students with Canadian mentors around the world.

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