

Exploring Earth's secrets from space: New program lets astronauts share with students what they've learned

OTTAWA, ON, January 22, 2019 – Hundreds of local Ottawa students sat quietly in the Canada Science and Technology Museum until the moment when Canadian Space Agency astronaut David Saint-Jacques graced the big screen with a smile and excited chatter broke out across the auditorium. This special live stream helped launch [Exploring Earth](#), a web-based educational program designed to give students and the public a new perspective of Earth. Floating against the backdrop of the International Space Station, Saint-Jacques shared with students his experiences from his first month up in space and answered a series of questions about Earth observation from space.

"I have always been fascinated by our home planet. Now, I have a chance to look at it from a completely different vantage point," said Saint-Jacques. "I really want to share this unique perspective with students and Canadians. Through my photos, I want them to develop an interest in understanding how our planet works, and I hope this knowledge will give us all the urge to better protect it."

Every week until the mission's end in June, Exploring Earth will share blogs featuring Saint-Jacques' photographs from space as a way to explore topics ranging from natural hazards and weather to landforms and the human footprint. In addition to the blogs, teachers will be able to explore a variety of educational resources, curriculum links, and classroom activity ideas. Although the educational resources are geared toward grades 4 to 12, anyone can access the website to explore Earth from space.

Saint-Jacques is not the only astronaut involved with this project. Roberta Bondar, Canada's first female astronaut and honorary vice-president of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, is a guest writer for Exploring Earth. As a celebrated nature photographer, Bondar's beautiful shots will bring her blogs to life, such as the one about bird species that require wetlands within their geographic range to survive.

"The Exploring Earth program will help students to deepen their understanding of some of the most pressing geographical issues facing our world today," said John Geiger, CEO of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society. "And what better way to learn about our planet than through the eyes of astronauts?"

This new educational web-based initiative has been spearheaded by The Canadian Space Agency in collaboration with Ingenium – Canada's Museums of Science and Innovation, the Roberta Bondar Foundation, Canadian Geographic Education, The Royal Canadian Geographical Society and Western University.

Media Information

Deborah Chapman, Communications Manager
Royal Canadian Geographical Society
O (613) 745-4629 ext. 160
Email: chapman@rcgs.org

Social Media Links: @CanGeoEdu, @RCGS_SGRC, @csa_asc, @IngeniumCa, @RBondarFdn, @Astro_DavidS