

Media Release

February 21, 2014

Service Learning: Powerful Higher Education

NORTH BAY, ONT. – Today, 12 enthusiastic students from Canadore College are travelling to First Nations communities in remote northern Ontario as part of a community service learning initiative.

The students will be visiting First Nations reserves in Moose Factory, Ont., nearby Moosonee, Ont. and Kashechewan, Ont. to work with at-risk youth. Canadore's students will spend time in community schools to raise awareness about high-risk issues such as bullying, self-harm, alcohol and drug use, and more.

The College and its First Peoples' Centre felt it was important for students to witness and experience the challenges faced by many remote Aboriginal communities, including extreme flooding, annual evacuations, drinking water problems, and more.

Canadore College Residence Life Coordinator and trip organizer, Jessica Charbonneau, explains that the visit's goal is to provide the College's students with an in-depth understanding of First Nations culture.

"Our visit is as much about bringing better cultural understanding to each other as anything else," said Charbonneau. "We are fortunate to be embraced by these communities with open arms. Community leaders will be including us in ritual practices and celebrations, as well as sharing their history and traditions."

Last February, Charbonneau led nine students on a service learning trip to the Dominican Republic. This year, Canadore wanted its students to experience challenges that are faced within Canada's own borders.

"You don't even have to leave Ontario to serve in developing communities and make an impact," said Charbonneau. "We don't often think of that, but it's true. I am hopeful that the students will grow and continue to affect change as a result of this experience."

The trip attracted the attention of students from Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention, Mental Health and Addiction Worker, Practical Nursing, Police Foundations, Community and Justice Services and Environmental Technician programs. Students were accepted into the program after a stringent selection process and have been meeting bi-weekly since November to learn about the mission, including cultural sensitivity training, native language, fundraising techniques and understanding expectations.

Students will be working with Payukotayno: James and Hudson Bay Family Services and the Moose Factory Youth Centre and will return on February 28. An additional group of students will be headed to the Dominican Republic for another service learning trip on March 7.

Canadore College's service learning initiatives are rooted in experiential learning and program learning outcomes, moving the College's programs from theoretical exercises to hands-on, real-life applications.

Canadore trains people through applied learning, leadership and innovation. It provides access to over 60 full-time quality programs and has outstanding faculty and student services. Approximately 1,000 students graduate from the College each year, and they join 40,000 alumni working across the globe.



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