

April 24, 2017

SCIENCE NORTH AND THE ROBERTA BONDAR FOUNDATION HAVE FORMED A NEW PARTNERSHIP

(SAULT STE. MARIE, ON) – Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, April 24, 2017 – Science North and The Roberta Bondar Foundation have formed a new partnership to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Dr. Roberta Bondar’s historic space travel with Earth Matters, a multi-city series of guest appearances throughout Northern Ontario focused on the trailblazing astronaut’s love for this planet.

The inspirational seven-stop series, which kicks off on April 25 at the Sault. Ste. Marie Science Festival in Dr. Bondar’s hometown, is part of Ontario’s 150th anniversary celebrations. The initiative also incorporates the photography-based Ontario150 Bondar Challenge.

“My view from the spacecraft Discovery 25 years ago forever changed my view of Earth, and it was on that flight that I committed to protect this magnificent planet,” says Dr. Bondar, whose Foundation is committed to connecting people to nature through photography in order to promote good health and protect the planet.

Dr. Bondar is not only Canada’s first woman and world’s first neurologist in space, she is also an award-winning photographer, who photographed each of Canada’s National Parks for the book *Passionate Vision – Discovering Canada’s National Parks*. She will illustrate her talks on how her unique perspective from space made her appreciate Earth using many of her fine art images and videos.

“As part of Science North’s mandate in serving Northern Ontario we are always looking for ways to extend our reach and bring science education to all communities in Northern Ontario,” says Guy Labine, Science North CEO. “We are delighted to partner with Dr. Bondar, who is such an inspiration to so many Canadians, in bringing her insights about our planet to Northern Ontario in such a unique way.”

“Ontario’s 150th anniversary is an opportunity for people to recognize and celebrate the incredible resources our province offers,” says Eleanor McMahon, Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. “Under the leadership of Dr. Bondar and Science North, Earth Matters and the Ontario150 Bondar Challenge will engage and help people connect with our natural world in an inspiring and impactful way.”

Dr. Bondar’s tour of the North has additional stops in Sudbury, North Bay, Timmins, Manitoulin Island, Kenora and Thunder Bay the dates for which will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

The Ontario 150 Bondar Challenge invites people to take photographs of an aspect of nature in their own community that they admire and hope will still exist 150 years from now. Participants will be asked to submit their photographs along with a brief description of why what they have captured is meaningful. Once submitted, these photos can be viewed on community pages found on www.therobertabondarfoundation.org.

The photography will be curated into narratives of each community's hopes for the 'natural future' and publicly posted. The illustrated online stories will be promoted by The Roberta Bondar Foundation on their site and social media channels as well as on the Science North website at sciencenorth.ca. More details about this challenge will be announced in the first stop of the tour on April 25, 11am at Algoma University, GLC Field House and posted at that time on the Foundation's website at www.therobertabondarfoundation.org

The event is aimed at students from grade 6 to 12 with members of the general public invited to attend. Tickets are free but limited and can be reserved online at sciencenorth.ca/ssmscifest.

"It is my hope that when people connect to nature through photography, they will love and respect Earth and work together to protect it so that we can enjoy a healthy life on a healthy planet," says Dr. Bondar.

About the Roberta Bondar Foundation

The Roberta Bondar Foundation's mission is to build healthier lives by protecting the natural heritage of our planet. By connecting people to nature through photography, the foundation aims to promote good health while protecting the planet. Programs include nature photography programs for youth, traveling photography exhibitions on biodiversity for all generations, research and speakers' series by Dr. Roberta Bondar. www.therobertabondarfoundation.org.

About Science North

Science North is Northern Ontario's most popular tourist attraction and an educational resource for children and adults across the province. Science North maintains the second- and eighth-largest science centres in Canada. Science North's attractions include a science centre, IMAX® theatre, digital Planetarium, butterfly gallery, special exhibits hall, and Dynamic Earth – Home of the Big Nickel, a separate science centre focused on mining and earth sciences. In addition to the two science centres in Sudbury, Science North also oversees an award-winning Large Format Film production unit, as well as an Exhibit Sales and Service unit, which develops custom and ready-made exhibits for sale or lease to science centres, museums, and other cultural institutions all over the world. Science North, in partnership with Laurentian University, have developed North America's first and only comprehensive Science Communication program, a 10-month joint graduate diploma program. As part of its mandate, Science North provides science experiences throughout Northern Ontario including outreach to schools and festivals, summer science camps and more, and has a permanent base in Thunder Bay providing

outreach to the Northwest. Science North is an agency of the Government of Ontario. For more information please visit ScienceNorth.ca.

About Ontario150

2017 is the 150th anniversary of Ontario as a province. To recognize this historically significant year, the government launched Ontario150, a year-long commemoration that is honouring the province's past, showcasing the present and inspiring future generations. Through Ontario150 grant programs and a series of signature initiatives, Ontario is engaging youth, encouraging cultural expression, promoting participation in sport and recreation, and creating economic opportunities across the province.

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