

Canada Life helps bring ground-breaking youth education to remote Manitoba Indigenous communities

Over \$500,000 committed to Teach For Canada & Connected North helps close education gap

Winnipeg, June 20, 2019. . . Today, in recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day, Canada Life announced a commitment of over \$500,000 combined to Teach For Canada and Connected North. Both non-profits will bring leading edge assistance for Indigenous youth education to remote northern Manitoba communities through creative tools, technology and in-classroom support.

“At Canada Life, we support educational initiatives aimed at helping Canadian youth grow and discover opportunities,” says Jeff Macoun, President and Chief Operating Officer for Canada Life. “We recognize that remote communities don’t always have equal access to educational resources. By bringing together the powerhouses that are Teach For Canada and Connected North, we’re helping to make a significant impact in closing the education gap here in Manitoba, in northern parts of the province, where many Indigenous communities reside. Alongside these organizations, we can empower students to help them, and their communities, grow stronger together.”

The funding will help Teach For Canada expand into Manitoba for the first time since launching across Ontario in 2015. Through new partnerships with First Nations in northern Manitoba, the organization will recruit, prepare and support committed teachers who can contribute to wider student success in the north.

“We have heard from education leaders in northern First Nations in Manitoba that teacher recruitment and retention is a big challenge when it comes to improving low graduation rates. Teach For Canada looks across the country to find, train and support educators who have the right aptitude and fit for a northern community. This school year, Teach For Canada supported 97 teachers in almost 20 northern schools who positively impacted the lives of over 2,000 First Nations students,” said Kevin Berube, Executive Director of Teach For Canada. “We’re grateful to Canada Life for their funding which will help us make a real and positive impact with new partners in northern Manitoba. In turn, we hope our teachers will support youth so they can graduate and pursue their dreams.”

With the support of Canada Life, Connected North will expand programming to serve two new schools in 2020. Connected North, founded by Cisco Systems and now operated by TakingITGlobal, is offered in 43 schools across Canada primarily serving Indigenous students. The program delivers immersive and interactive education programming to remote Indigenous communities through high definition, two-way video communication and collaboration technology.

“Connected North is proud to collaborate with Canada Life to deliver interactive learning by highlighting inspiring Indigenous role models and providing virtual field trips for Indigenous students in remote communities,” said Michael Furdyk, Co-founder and Director of Innovation at TakingITGlobal. “We appreciate Canada Life’s support and commitment to provide students with access to content that is engaging and innovative, with the hope of increasing feelings of empowerment in school and in life.”

As one of the inaugural signatories of the Winnipeg Indigenous Accord, Great-West Life, now operating under the new Canada Life brand - must annually report success and future goals. In 2018, the company made progress on projects that focus on:

- Supporting Indigenous post-secondary awards, bursaries, internships and programs;
- Helping to provide leadership and mentorship programming;
- Funding health and wellness projects in Manitoba.

Unanimously adopted in March 2017 by Winnipeg City Council, Winnipeg’s Indigenous Accord is rooted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action. A detailed list of Canada Life’s progress and goals related to the Accord is available online.

About Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life

Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life are leading insurance, wealth management and benefits specialists, focused on improving the financial, physical and mental well-being of Canadians. Under the new Canada Life brand, we help Canadians achieve their potential, every day. Our customers across Canada have trusted us to provide for their financial security needs and deliver on the promises we have made. Together, we serve the financial security needs of more than 13 million people across Canada and provide a wide range of products and services for individuals, families and business owners.

As an Imagine Caring Company, we support the principles of corporate citizenship and benchmarks for community investment established by Imagine Canada. Our companies contribute at least one per cent of pre-tax profit in support of the communities where our employees and customers live and work. This includes \$13.3 million in contributions to non-profit, charitable and community organizations in 2018.

About Teach For Canada

Teach For Canada works with northern First Nations to recruit, prepare, and support committed teachers. Too often, teachers arrive in the north without the preparation and support they need to succeed—and stay—in the classroom. The twin challenge of teacher supply and turnover compound historical injustices and systemic inequities to produce an education gap between First Nations and non-First Nations communities. We work with partners to begin to close that gap.

About Connected North

Connected North fosters student engagement and enhanced education outcomes in remote Indigenous communities. This leading-edge program delivers immersive and interactive education services, through Cisco’s high definition, two-way TelePresence video technology. The program is made possible through a strong ecosystem of supporters with program delivery managed by TakingITGlobal, a Toronto-based registered charity. The goal is to provide students and teachers with access to content that is engaging and innovative, with the hope of increasing feelings of empowerment in school and in life.

Read the backgrounder for further information on [Canada Life’s progress on Winnipeg’s Indigenous Accord](#).

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