



1100 Chestnut St.
Vancouver, BC V6J 3J9
Phone (604) 738-7827
Fax (604) 736-5665

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENTION: News/Science/Education/Family Section Reporters

BC students colonize UBC with Martian habitat Marsville light years away from dullsville

Vancouver, BC, May 8, 2008 – Mere weeks before a NASA spacecraft lands on Mars, almost 400 BC grade five-to-seven students will land on UBC for Canadian National Marsville Link-Up Day, hosted by the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre.

Canadian National Marsville Link-Up Day launches 10 a.m. tomorrow at the UBC Student Recreation Centre. Canadian National Marsville is a cross-country and cross-curricular program where students plan a mission to Mars by applying knowledge from a variety of subject areas, including science, math, technology, communications, humanities and social sciences.

The UBC Student Recreation Centre will be transformed into a Martian habitat of plastic bubbles constructed with plastic, duct tape, and fans -- the result of hard work and preparation by students from Pauline Johnson in West Vancouver, Queen Elizabeth in Vancouver, Falkland Elementary in Falkland, Anne Hebert in Vancouver, and Edith Mcdermott in Maple Ridge.

"For the past 12 years, the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre has coordinated the efforts of BC schools involved in this exciting cross-Canada program. We are excited to be involved again this year in this unique and far-reaching educational opportunity," said Tracy Cromwell, Space Centre director of development and marketing.

Students prepared for tomorrow's Link-Up Day weeks in advance by working in their schools on the following activities: learning how to construct a Martian habitat by also learning about Mars; designing their own team mission patch; researching and designing life support systems (air, water, transportation, communication, etc.); and communicating with other students outside their classroom in order to cooperatively design their habitat.

Stephane LeBlanc, a grade six-and-seven teacher at Anne Hebert Elementary, signed up his class for the fourth time to participate in Canadian National Marsville. "Marsville is a fascinating and engaging learning experience for my students," said LeBlanc. The learning involved is second-to-none. The students gain a lot from the experience, including the knowledge associated with the solar system, space exploration and Mars. But, most importantly, they gain valuable teamwork skills and hands-on experience in building their life-support systems.

"Link-Up Day is a high-energy, action-packed day and the kids have a blast, making it fun for teachers and parents as well," added LeBlanc.

Key supporters of Link-Up Day are RBC Foundation, Imperial Oil Foundation, and the UBC Faculty of Science.



RBC Foundation®



“RBC is pleased to support the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre’s Canadian National Marsville Link-Up Day,” said Jennifer Cabeldu, manager of donations, RBC Foundation. “We hope students who complete the program leave with a better understanding of our complex solar system.”

RBC Royal Bank is committed to making a lasting social impact through inspired responsible giving and by building strong partnerships with the charitable sector. RBC is a leading corporate donor in North America and has invested more than \$42 million in charities in hundreds of communities.

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit community resource that brings the wonders of space to Earth, while providing a personal sense of ongoing discovery. Through innovative programming, exhibits and activities, our goal is to inspire sustained interest in the fields of Earth science, space science and astronomy from a Canadian perspective.

-30-

Media Contacts:

Michele Penz, Calico Communications for the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre
Tel: 778-888-2249