

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Canadian High School Students launch Eco-Pledge program called ICCommit

Ottawa (Nov. 18) -- Leading up to "Global Day of Action on Climate" on December 6 to 7, students from four Canadian provinces are launching a home-grown eco-pledge program involving 20 schools and an estimated 15,000 Canadian students.

The simple yet imaginative pilot program called "**ICCommit**" was developed by Canadian high school students to raise awareness of climate change issues among young people. The organizers are known as International Climate Champions (ICC). They were selected last winter by the British Council in Canada to represent their country in a global British Council program that engages more than 200 students worldwide. Three of the Canadian students presented the "Kobe Challenge" to the G8 Environment Ministers who met in Japan last May.

In late November and early December, the students will make presentations on climate science and the human impact on climate change at high schools and elementary schools in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. A school in Lucknow, India, is also involved. Students will be asked to make personal environmental commitments (i.e. "I will walk to school everyday"; "I will not use a hair dryer") and they will be given ICCommit green bracelets to wear to remind them of their promises. They will be asked to uphold these commitments for the duration of the school week (Dec. 1 to 5).

On Friday, December 5, students will be asked to reflect upon the changes they made for that week and to consider making them permanent. The climate champions hope the initiative will generate widespread change across Canada.

Over the week, students will be asked to add personal commitments (identified only by their school names) to the ICC website (www.iccommit.com). The data will be presented to the G8 Environment Ministers who will be meeting in Italy in May 2009.

The Canadian climate champs are part of the British Council's **International Climate Champions** program that has already involved trips to the British Prime Minister's residence in London, the G8 Environment Ministers' summit in Kobe, Japan, and the Canadian Science Writers' Assoc. Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon.

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organization to promote education and cultural relations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Climate Champions involved in the program:

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BACKGROUNDER:

International Climate Champions:

Julie D'Aoust

Julie D'Aoust is a student at Marianopolis College in Montreal. She has won several academic awards including the 2007 Regional Science Fair Gold Medal and a certificate of excellence in the History of Quebec and Canada for attaining 100% on the 2007 provincial exam. This year, her team won the prestigious Shalheveth Freier Physics Tournament held in Israel. She has also participated in her school's film festival for the last two years. In addition, she attended several conferences including the Youth Summit on Climate Change (2007), Montreal Millennium Summit (2007), the Youth Empowered Conference (2008) and the Canadian Science Writers' Association Conference (2008). She is a pianist and has studied the violin and clarinet.

Meredith Drieseberg

From Nelson High School in Burlington, Ontario, Meredith Drieseberg is a grade 11 student who enjoys participating in discussions and debates on environmental issues including competing in various public speaking competitions. She is an active member of her school's biology club that promotes environmental diversity and is a member of the Student Activity Council. In addition, Meredith attended the Southern Ontario Model United Nations Assembly where she represented the tiny Pacific island nation Tuvalu and was on the Historical Crisis Committee for the Korean War.

Caroline Jo

Caroline Jo is a student at Marianopolis College in Montreal. This year, she was one of the top speakers at the provincial debating tournament and was selected to participate in the North American Debating Championships. In 2007, Caroline received awards for Outstanding Personal Character and Intellectual Promise from the Yale Club of Montreal as well as the school's Journalism Prize. She has won several awards for writing, math, and science (including the McGill Chemistry award), and was part of the team that won Israel's Shalheveth Freier Physics Tournament. In addition to this, Caroline has completed over 300 hours of community service and participated in the Montreal Millennium Summit (2007) and the Youth Empowered Conference (2008). She has a red belt in Tae Kwon Do and is a marathon runner.

Luisa Lizoain

Grade 11 student Luisa Lizoain attends the University of Toronto Schools in Toronto. She is an active member of her community and put into action a Green Bin program in her school with the help of her peers. In this program, she was responsible for recruiting, training, and organizing over 80 volunteers. Her leadership and strong communication skills allow Luisa to be an advocate for community partnerships to encourage action on climate change issues locally. She is also a member of her school's student council and attended the Model United Nations for students across southern Ontario last spring. She was recently selected by the British Council Canada to represent her school and region in the Cape Farewell Youth Expedition 2008 that travelled to the Arctic in September.

Graham May

Grade 11 student Graham May from Brooks Secondary School in Powell River, British Columbia, is an active member of Students for Environmental Awareness (SEA). He played a key role in the formation of SEA, whose activities include beach cleanups, educating elementary school children on the environment, and attending city council meetings. He has also had the opportunity to be a youth representative at a press conference for the creation of a sustainability charter in his local community. He is a grass roots activist who organized a 160-km charity bike ride which raised more than \$2,000 for malaria prevention.

Meagan McKeen

As the president of Abbey Park High School's Environmental Council in Oakville, Ontario, Meagan McKeen is an active youth leader devoted to raising awareness on environmental issues. She will be a delegate at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland in December. In grade 12, she is the founder of her school's Eco Schools program which won the Silver Eco Schools Award. She has spearheaded several environmental initiatives including a "greening project" that plants over 250 trees in Oakville every fall and spring. Meagan is a Student Representative for the Halton District School Board's Environmental Management Team. She was also a speaker at the Board's Eco Schools Conference where she debated the use of cosmetic pesticides. Her participation allowed for a bylaw to be enacted several months later.

Jacqueline Proctor

Jacqueline Proctor is a grade 12 student from Warren Collegiate Institute in Warren, Manitoba. In January 2007, she was nominated by her school to participate in the Global Youth Leadership Program in Washington DC and New York City. Here she discussed, debated, and presented global issues at the United Nations Youth Summit representing Japan. She was also nominated to take part in the global summit being held this June in Beijing, China. Jacqueline is passionate about educating and engaging local schools and community groups to work together on issues of climate change.

Katie Skyvington

From Stouffville District Secondary School, in Stouffville, Ontario, Katie Skyvington is a grade 12 student who is passionate about educating and informing others about climate change issues. She has been involved in a number of environmental initiatives in her school and is currently enrolled in Leadership Enrichment and Development (LEAD), a school program aimed at cultivating strong leadership skills through opportunities to help the local community. In 2006, she was selected to attend the Youth Leadership Summit in Salt Lake City, where she learned how to put plans for change into action.