

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 26, 2018

Girl Guides Launch New Girl-Driven Program: Girls First

Morin-Heights, Québec – On Saturday, September 29, 450 members of Girl Guides of Canada – Guides du Canada will gather at Camp Wa-Thik-Ane in Morin Heights to celebrate the launch of a new Guiding program.

Guiding began in England in 1909 and made its way to Canada by 1910, with the first unit in St. Catherine's, Ontario. By 1912 there were units in all provinces and in 1926 Camp Wa-Thik-Ane was opened in Québec to provide girls with opportunities to learn and develop new skills in the great outdoors.

In order to stay relevant to girls and compete with the range of other extracurricular activities offered in modern society, the Guiding program has had to change and be updated a number of times over the years. This year for the first time, the programs for each branch (Sparks for girls in Kindergarten-grade 1, Brownies for girls in grades 2-3, Guides for girls in grades 4-6, Pathfinders for girls in secondary 1-3 and Rangers for girls in secondary 4 up until the time they turn 18) will all be changing at the same time in a dramatic and exciting shift to a digital rather than paper-based platform.

As the name Girls First (or ExceptionnElles in French) suggests, this new program puts girls' interests front and centre! Guiding invites and encourages every girl to be actively involved in her Guiding experience. It is completely flexible and has been developed based on what girls told Guiding they want - from activities, content and topics, to the kinds of skills they want to learn. Every girl will have access to choosing her own activities and challenges, and ultimately creating her own Guiding adventure. This web-based platform will allow for content to consistently change, grow and meet every girl's needs and interests. Most of all, Girls First is FUN! Whether they're campers, advocates, explorers, experimenters, tinkerers, budding artists or do-it – yourselfers, this new program has something for everyone.

“The key to our success in Guiding in Québec lies in our willingness to focus on and work towards girl-driven events, giving girls a voice and a safe space to advocate for and experience everything she wants to be,” says RoseAnna Cirino, Provincial Commissioner for Girl Guides of Canada, Québec Council.

Saturday's launch has been planned by Québec Council's Next Generation Forum, girl members ages 14-17, with the assistance of Girls First Champions, young Guiders hand-selected to mentor others in this transition year. It will include stations related to each of the seven new program areas (Guide Together, Be Well, Experiment and

Create, Explore Identities, Connect and Question, Take Action and Build Skills), and of course, celebratory cupcakes!

Find out more about Guiding in Québec by visiting guidesquebec.ca or calling 1-800-565-8111.

Photo and interview opportunities are available. For more information, contact:

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About Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada, Québec Council

Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada (GGC) empowers every girl in Guiding to discover herself and be Everything she wants to be. In Guiding, girls from 5-17 meet with girls their own age in a safe, inclusive space to explore what matters to them. With programming options ranging from innovative STEM activities to outdoor adventures and discussions on mental health and healthy relationships, girls in Guiding can customize their experience to dive into the topics relevant to them. GGC is where girls take the lead, put their ideas into action and jump into awesome activities – all with the support of engaged Guiders who are committed to positively impacting their lives. Guiding is all about supporting girls as they take on challenges and grab hold of every opportunity that comes their way.