

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CSA Astronaut Julie Payette Visits Yellowknife

Excitement Builds for Presentations to Students, Parents and Teachers

(YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES) Canadian Space Agency Astronaut Julie Payette will be front and centre in Yellowknife this week, as she delivers a series of inspirational presentations to students, parents and teachers that will emphasize the importance of education, skills development and planning for the future.

Payette will share her message with over 750 of the North's brightest young stars, beginning with a presentation to over 450 students (Grades 6-8 from across Yellowknife) at Weledeh Catholic School tomorrow at 1:45 p.m., followed by a talk to 125 high school students, parents and teachers at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m., and a presentation to 175 French immersion students at École Allain St-Cyr (Grades 4-6 from across Yellowknife) on Thursday morning at 10:30 a.m.

These presentations will include an out-of-this-world look at Payette's second voyage to the International Space Station, which launched last summer aboard Space Shuttle Endeavour. Mission STS-127 lasted 16 days, completed 248 orbits around Earth, and traveled a distance of over 10.5 million kilometres – a success story that will now be used to capture the imagination of northern youth.

"Julie Payette's visit will inspire a lot of students, and is an excellent example of how the Canadian Space Agency is staying connected with classrooms in the North and across Canada," says James Pugsley, President of Astronomy North. "This is an exciting opportunity for students, parents and teachers to learn about space science and space exploration from a truly Canadian perspective."

Skills development and planning will also be an important part of this week's presentations. Canadian technology was used almost every day of the mission, and Payette was responsible for the operation of three robotic arms, the Shuttle's Canadarm, the Station's Canadarm2 and a Japanese arm on the Kibo laboratory.

"This visit also allows our youth to see how the skills they are learning in the North align with the needs of the space industry in Canada and around the world," says Pugsley. "Students developing their robotics, computer programming, engineering, science and technical skills will have career options that go far beyond one territory, one nation and even one planet – these are Universal skills that bring exciting opportunities."

Payette's visit also marks the return of The Legendary Sky Diamond, a symbolic rough stone that flew aboard Space Shuttle Endeavour last July to raise awareness of The Legendary Sky Project, an Astronomy North education and outreach initiative dedicated to northern sky knowledge and heritage. The diamond is one of a series of educational treasures that will help teach students about the nature, culture and wonder of Canada's northern sky. This ancient stone will be unveiled on June 24, 2010 with the launch of The Legendary Sky Exhibit at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife.

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