

### Earth Day Challenge

Earth Day Canada's EcoKids Program is now promoting the 9th Annual Great EcoKids Challenge, a national contest that encourages youth and educators across Canada to take environmental action in their schools and communities. The Great EcoKids Challenge provides an opportunity for schools to participate in large-scale group activities that enrich lives, develop leadership and teamwork skills, increase awareness and support a healthier environment. Winners, awarded in three age categories (primary, junior and intermediate), will receive prizes from Sony Canada. The deadline for applications is April 30, 2010. Register online at [www.ecokids.ca](http://www.ecokids.ca)

### Making Science Fun

Spongelab Interactive ([www.spongelab.com](http://www.spongelab.com)), an Ontario-based educational gaming company, has been awarded first prize in the Interactive Media category from the Journal of Science and National Science Foundation's 2009 Visualization Challenge for the second consecutive year. This award is published in the February 19, 2010 issue of the Journal of Science (Science: Vol. 327. no. 5968, p. 949) and featured on the National Science Foundation's website. Spongelab Interactive's Genomics Digital Lab ([www.genomicsdigitallab.com](http://www.genomicsdigitallab.com)), breathes new life into students' exploration of science and learning in the classroom and at home. Recognition from the National Science Foundation's 2009 Visualization Challenge award along with Spongelab's win of the United Nations World Summit Award in September 2009 for e-science and technology marks the third international award from a global body promoting the best in digital learning technologies, putting Canada on the map. To see the award published in Science, visit [www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org) or for more information on the 2009 Visualization Challenge, visit [http://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/scivis/winners\\_2009.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/scivis/winners_2009.jsp)

### Growing Greener Schools

PBS Educational Media has released a DVD entitled *Growing Greener Schools*, a multi-media resource that illustrates best practices for creating sustainable schools and integrating environmental education into curriculum. Drawing on first-hand experiences of educators and green experts, the program showcases projects undertaken by schools around the US in urban and suburban areas, both large and small. Along with hands-on examples of how these institutions are incorporating sustainable practices and environmental lessons into their schools, educators and students discuss the effects on student health, attendance, test scores and preparedness for green jobs. The program also includes a roadmap for administrators and school boards to examine how to build eco-friendly school buildings from the ground up; retrofit older classrooms to new green standards; and operate green campuses. Program participants also demonstrate how "going green" is helping schools save money. Resources accompanying the video include: a 132-page downloadable Handbook and Curriculum Guide with cross-curricula lessons for grades 6 – 12; six interactive games related to lessons; 46-page Appendix with step-by-step information on how to create a sustainable school, grant writing tips, a 21st Century Skills matrix, and more. For more information visit [shopPBS.org/education/](http://shopPBS.org/education/)

### New Website to Motivate Teens

MoveIt4.org is a new website (US) providing teenagers with valuable information, tools and interaction to

encourage them to become more active and take more responsibility for their own health and nutrition. The MoveIt4.org website features: fitness and nutrition written for teens from medical experts and professional trainers; suggested activities to get fit, burn calories and have great fun with others; Fitness Tracker to help teenagers track their fitness goals and progress; Media Center which lists relevant teen fitness and health news, plus compelling athletic videos; Mentors Blog highlighting athletes and celebrities who have achieved their goals and are now giving back through charitable acts and organizations they support; information and tips for teens' parents, teachers and coaches; dictionary of fitness and health terms.

MoveIt4.org will also utilize social networks including Facebook ([www.facebook.com/MoveIt4](http://www.facebook.com/MoveIt4)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/MoveIt4](http://www.twitter.com/MoveIt4)) to interact with teens, share compelling content and help them keep fitness and health top of mind.

### Robert Bateman's Get to Know Contest

Every year Robert Bateman's Canada-wide *Get to Know Contest* attracts thousands of art, writing and photography entries from youth aged 19 and under. 2010 marks the 10th anniversary of the *Get to Know Contest*, which also coincides with the UN International Year of BioDiversity. The 2010 Contest will launch on April 22nd (Earth Day), and continue until May 28th.

The *Get to Know Contest* is built on Robert Bateman's philosophy that "caring for the planet begins with getting to know our wild neighbours of other species." By encouraging youth to go outdoors, Bateman hopes to build a generation of active, healthy, knowledgeable and passionate youth who understand their world and want to work to make it better. For entry information, visit [www.gettoknow.ca](http://www.gettoknow.ca)

### Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act

Recognizing that bullying and harassment can affect students' mental and physical health and success in school, Ontario passed new legislation that took effect on February 1, 2010, aiming to make schools safer. The Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act requires school staff to report serious bullying incidents and other inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour to the principal, and the principal must contact parents of the victims. Ontario is the first province to make such reporting measures mandatory. For more information, visit [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/new/new.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/new/new.html)

### Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

Each November, the Teachers Institute brings seventy educators from across Canada to Ottawa for an intensive week of professional development on Parliament Hill. The institute is organized by the Library of Parliament under the auspices of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons. Participants explore issues around citizenship and democracy and develop strategies for teaching about parliament, democracy and citizenship. There is a registration fee of \$500 but the program covers travel, accommodation and most meals. The Churchill Society for the Advancement of Parliamentary Democracy offers two \$500 bursaries to cover the application fee ([www.churchillsociety.org](http://www.churchillsociety.org)). Applications are invited until April 30, 2010.

Web: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Sites/LOP/Education/TeachersInstitute/index.asp?Language=E>

### Report on Class Size

The Canadian Education Association has released a report on reducing class size that includes what has been learned from an evaluation in Ontario and a review of the literature and other jurisdictions. *Reducing Class Size: What Do We Know?* provides insights into how to maximize the positive impact of class size reduction policies directed at elementary schools. Written by Dr. Nina Bascia of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the report concludes that reducing class size can make a positive difference to teaching and learning particularly when combined with other policies that support effective classroom practice. The report is available online at:

[http://www.cea-ace.ca/media/en/CEA\\_ClassSize\\_NationalReport.pdf](http://www.cea-ace.ca/media/en/CEA_ClassSize_NationalReport.pdf)

### Free E-Book To Help Children Understand Earthquakes

To help teachers explain the recent earthquake tragedies to children, Sylvan Dell has posted *Pandas' Earthquake Escape* e-book on their homepage free for the month of March. *Pandas' Earthquake Escape* written by Phyllis Perry with illustrations by Susan Detwiler follows the adventures of a mother panda and her cub as they struggle to survive outside the comfort of their reserve for several days after the devastating earthquake that hit China two years ago. A 6-page non-fiction educational section is provided at the back of the book, helping children understand the shifting plates and dynamic earth forces at work, and a 50-page cross-curricular Teaching Activities section is available online. To read *Pandas' Earthquake Escape*, click on the cover image under the March Feature on the homepage at [www.SylvanDellPublishing.com](http://www.SylvanDellPublishing.com)

### Education Research Review

The Canadian Education Association (CEA) annual year-end review of education research, which summarizes notable reports and studies and identifies trends in education research in 2009 is available online. To read the report in PDF format, visit the CEA website ([cea-ace.ca](http://cea-ace.ca)) and click on the "Research & Policy" link.



**Imagine a child smiling despite so much suffering.**

It can happen. We just need to give him a reason.

Help us help them.

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WFP World Food Programme  
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