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STUDENTS ALONG SEA TO SKY CONNECT WITH NATURE IN FIRST-EVER MOUNTAIN TO OCEANS OUTDOOR PROGRAM

Brackendale, BC – An enthusiastic group of youth from across British Columbia came together October 4-7 in the Sea to Sky for the inaugural Mountain to Oceans outdoor education program and adventure leadership retreat. Thirty high school students were chosen from over sixty applicants to participate in this Ocean Wise pilot program, partnered with Cheakamus Centre, Sea to Sky Gondola, and the Squamish Rafting Company.

“I was interested in taking part in this program because I love the outdoors. The program sounded like an incredible opportunity to experience and learn about our local ecosystems, as well as doing some pretty cool activities!” said Erin, high school student at Mount Douglas Secondary, Victoria, BC.

This immersive learning program was designed to enrich students’ understanding of the connections between mountains and oceans through outdoor experiences. Activities focused on ecosystems, research, wilderness tours, leadership, and First Nations culture. Beginning at sea level with a sleepover at the Vancouver Aquarium, the program traced a route along the Sea to Sky corridor into the Coast Mountains, with opportunities for hiking at the Sea to Sky Gondola and exploration of Cheakamus Centre’s 165 ha ecological reserve.

“This was the first-ever Mountain to Oceans program, and it brought together not only like-minded youth with a strong sense of adventure but also partner organizations all along the Sea to Sky,” said Hailey Renaud, Manager of Children and Youth programs at Ocean Wise. “Connecting young people to nature is rewarding for everyone involved, but it is also vital work to engage the next generation to ensure our oceans, mountains and overall environment are healthy for them.”

The Mountains to Oceans program was a successful collaboration of outdoor education and recreation organizations that provided participants with remarkable learning experiences that had a strong connection to place.

“We were thrilled to be one of the founding partners, and to share our Coast Salish longhouse and indigenous traditions and teachings with the Mountain to Oceans group. The longhouse is a powerful place of learning and was a memorable experience for all involved,” said Conor McMullan, director of educational programs at Cheakamus Centre.

The action-packed program wrapped up with a Squamish Rafting Company excursion down the Cheakamus River to the head of Howe Sound, further deepening the mountains to oceans connection for youth participants.

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[Cheakamus Centre](#)

Established in 1969, Cheakamus Centre is an environmental and indigenous cultural education organization located on the traditional territories of the Ch'i'yáqmesh people in Paradise Valley, BC. An ambitious campus renewal project is currently underway that will see a revitalization of facilities and programming over the next several years.

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Ocean Wise is a not-for-profit organization whose vision is a world in which oceans are healthy and flourishing.

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