



Canadian Canoe Foundation and the Ayalik Fund receive a \$22,000 Bell Let's Talk Community Fund grant to support youth mental health

January 24, 2022 – Inuit believe in the power of the land to nurture and teach. In Inuit tradition, *sila* – often translated as the “outdoors” – is more deeply thought of as a life force and an individual’s inner connection to the environment. For the past seven years, the Ayalik Fund has been providing experiences for Inuit youth which are rooted in this powerful connection. The Canadian Canoe Foundation has been a partner in support of these programs since 2018.

This charitable program’s mandate is to give Inuit youth from Nunavut who would otherwise not have such opportunities a chance to build self-esteem and confidence through challenging outdoor experiences, meeting other young Canadians, and social-cultural exploration. In itself, facing the challenge of a canoe trip fosters growth and well-being.

In the summer of 2022, three major canoe trips sponsored by the [Canadian Canoe Foundation](#) and the [Ayalik Fund](#) will provide such an opportunity for 25 Inuit youth, boys and girls, ages 14-17.

“Bell Let’s Talk is pleased to help the Canadian Canoe Foundation and the Ayalik Fund provide Inuit youth in Nunavut with outdoor experiences to help support their mental health and wellness,” said Mary Deacon, Chair of Bell Let’s Talk. “The Bell Let’s Talk Community Fund provides grants to community-based mental health organizations and initiatives throughout the country working to provide opportunities for young people to live better lives.”

“With the assistance of a \$22,000 Bell Let’s Talk Community Fund grant, an experienced outdoor educator and mental health and wellness counsellor will

accompany each of these trips,” said Patrick Henry, Chair and Founder of the Canadian Canoe Foundation. “This allows us to support the Ayalik program in a very meaningful way that will add to the trips’ benefits for the youth, by building their resilience and adding further to their sense of well-being.”

Youth participants for these trips are selected at the grassroots level in communities across Nunavut, with a view to supporting those facing life challenges, who may be experiencing difficult circumstances. Last year, after the summer’s programs, Alex Ittimangnaq, community liaison in Kugaaruk, wrote: *“When they arrived back home, they had their heads held high. I could tell they really grew from the experience.”*

Bell Let’s Talk Day is January 26

On Bell Let’s Talk Day, Bell donates 5 cents to Canadian mental health programs for every applicable text, local or long distance call, tweet or TikTok video using #BellLetsTalk, every [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), [TikTok](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) view of the Bell Let’s Talk Day video, and every use of the Bell Let’s Talk Facebook frame or Snapchat lens. All at no cost to participants beyond what they would normally pay their service provider for online or phone access.

Bell Let’s Talk promotes Canadian mental health with national awareness and anti-stigma campaigns like Bell Let’s Talk Day and significant Bell funding of community care and access, research and workplace leadership initiatives throughout the country. To learn more, please visit Bell.ca/LetsTalk.

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About [Canadian Canoe Foundation](#) and the [Ayalik Fund](#)

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