

# PRESS RELEASE

**WHO: THE EXPLORATION PLACE MUSEUM AND SCIENCE CENTRE**  
**WHAT: EXTENDED CLOSURE AND RENOVATIONS**  
**CONTACT: TRACY CALOgheros**

The Exploration Place Board of Trustees along with the Centre's Management made the difficult decision to delay re-opening the facility until the spring of 2021. At a June 30 meeting, the group decided that an extended closure is necessary for the health and welfare of the community. The closure will also allow the Centre to undergo a much-needed renovation which will enhance The Exploration Place's ability to offer a world-class experience right here in Prince George.

"In a time of crisis individuals turn to their community institutions for information, inspiration and support," said Shauna Harper, Board Co-chair, "The Exploration Place has continued to provide steady leadership in these unprecedented times while reimagining what Hands On Discovery Learning will look like Post-COVID."

"Truth be told we've never actually stopped delivering our world-class programming," says Tracy Calogheros, CEO. "Our pivot to online was almost instantaneous and it's getting better every day!" Tens of thousands of you have engaged with us online since we closed our building on March 13<sup>th</sup> and we love all of you for that! We will continue to offer you new online experiences; launching our online Nature Exchange and Speaker Series this summer; offering FREE in class school programs starting this fall all over Northern BC and by upgrading our obsolete Collections Database to a brand new system this winter. Our gift shop is available for curbside pick-up and we are still selling those great, non-medical masks to help keep us all safe.

Staff are working in the building, renovating our galleries, access points and interpretation. We are planning to offer a large, indoor botanical Palaeo-Garden and a major expansion to our Animal Ambassador Program and Biome that will explore climate, evolution and what tools we have in our history that can be used to inform our future. We will reconfigure the Ted Williams History Hall with more room for in-house exhibits drawing on our collection and archives of over 1,000,000 entries, and we will be creating new space to showcase indigenous material culture and traditional ways of knowing.

"I can't express to everyone just how much we miss all of you. Everything we do here at The Exploration Place is about our community and our future leaders," said Tracy Calogheros. "We had been working towards a major refresh of our galleries for several years, our last major overhaul was in 2000 so it just makes sense to do that work now."

We will not be offering the Early Explorers Preschool or Fort George Explorers After School Care Programs this fall. "This part of our physical closure is particularly devastating to me," said Tracy Calogheros. "We have been offering camps since 1996 and Out of School Care since 2001. However, the very same environment that makes those programs unique is working against us in a world where high-touch surfaces and closed air handling systems are unsafe."

We will be embarking on a fundraising campaign to secure the necessary funds to reinvent ourselves once again, better, more modern and safer. In the meantime, we will be looking for all of you online, in your schools and at Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park.

"Science, culture and history have never been more important to our society, we will get this right. Please stay healthy, wear your masks and stay in touch. We will get through this together" concludes Calogheros. "We can't wait to see you again!"