



HELPING KIDS DISCOVER NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Janet Barlow  
Ecology Action Centre  
902-442-5055  
asrts@ecologyaction.ca

Jessica Starkey  
The North Face  
514-832-0040 x271  
jessica\_starkey@vfc.com

### **THE NORTH FACE EXPLORE FUND AWARDS GRANT TO ECOLOGY ACTION CENTRE**

*Trans-Actions: Youth Cycling Leader Clubs supports a national effort to increase outdoor participation among Halifax youth*

Halifax, NS – November 9, 2011– The North Face has awarded a \$2,500 grant to the Ecology Action Centre's Active & Safe Routes to School program to help children and families explore the outdoors. Its Trans-Actions project will work with three high schools in the Halifax area to establish youth cycling leader clubs, which will tackle the challenge of increasing cycling and walking to school among their peers. The Active & Safe Routes to School program was selected from hundreds of applications because it envisions walking, cycling or using other forms of active transportation as a popular and safe choice made by children, youth and their families for the trip to school and other places they go. In the first of two grant cycles in 2011, The North Face awarded \$125,000 Explore Fund grants to 52 projects helping more than 30,000 kids to connect to nature.

"We're so pleased to have the support of the Explore Fund Grant," says Janet Barlow, Active & Safe Routes to School Coordinator with the Ecology Action Centre. "Spending time outdoors is such an essential part of growing up. Through our Trans-Actions project, we hope to inspire more teens to get outside and be active by using active transportation such as walking and cycling."

The Ecology Action Centre's Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program was established in 2001 to increase active transportation among children and youth. Since it's founding, the program has involved over 300 schools or groups across NS. It offers a suite of innovative programming – including Walking School Buses, safety education, special events, School Travel Planning and more – to promote active transportation as a healthy lifestyle choice. In addition, ASRTS has been able to advance its mandate exponentially with the support of several important partner organizations including the Nova Scotia Government, Green Communities Canada, Transport Canada as well as foundations, school boards, health boards and municipalities.

"First-hand experience is essential to ignite a passion for the outdoors, and that shouldn't be limited by gender, race or income level," said Ann Krcik, director of outdoor participation at The North Face.

“At The North Face, we’re dedicated to providing everyone with the access to our natural playgrounds and the resources they need to get outside.”

The Trans-Actions: Youth Cycling Leader Clubs project is recruiting high schools this fall so it may launch in January 2012. To learn more about Active & Safe Routes to School of the Ecology Action Centre and the Trans-Actions project visit [www.saferoutesns.ca](http://www.saferoutesns.ca). To learn more about all of the Explore Fund grantees and to keep up on their progress visit [www.planetexplore.com](http://www.planetexplore.com).

### **About Ecology Action Centre**

Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) in Nova Scotia encourages more children, youth and their families to use active transportation - such as walking and cycling - for the environment, physical activity and traffic safety. ASRTS is coordinated by the Ecology Action Centre in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness as part of the Active Kids Healthy Kids Initiative.

### **About The North Face Explore Fund**

The North Face® Explore Fund™ is a grant program committed to supporting non-profit, community organizations that break down the barriers preventing children and families from experiencing the outdoors. The Explore Fund, administered by The Outdoor Foundation, finds, engages and provides funding for new partners that help further the mission of inspiring the next generation of explorers and conservationists by helping them discover nature's playground.

### **About PlanetExplore**

PlanetExplore is an online community founded by The North Face, powered by partner organizations that share a passion for the outdoors, and designed to help individuals and families learn about and participate in outdoor activities and events in their area. PlanetExplore is a portal to the outdoors designed to inspire and enable people of all ages to become regularly active outside, and to enjoy the benefits gained through a connection to nature.

For more information, please visit our websites:

The Explore Fund [www.explorefund.com](http://www.explorefund.com)

Planet Explore [www.planetexplore.com](http://www.planetexplore.com)

###