

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Federal Party Leaders speak out on Canada's national identity**

*Canada Place's "Our Canada" creates a national forum*

**Vancouver, BC** – The Leaders of Canada's federal parties have briefly put aside their political differences to participate in a national discussion about why they love Canada. Launched by Canada Place prior to the country's 142<sup>nd</sup> birthday, the *Our Canada* initiative asks, "Why do you love Canada?"

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says: "From Alert to St. John's to Victoria, I am always struck by our majestic landscapes, our precious natural resources, our kindhearted people and the ingenuity of a nation that is quite simply the best country in the world in which to live."

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff says, "I love Canada because for all of the incredible complexity of our country, we set an example on how to live together."

The Leader of the New Democratic Party, Jack Layton, loves Canada because it is the only country in the world where every country is represented. "This shows our commitment to diversity and promotion of multiculturalism. People look to Canada as a beacon of hope and an example of democracy. We are lucky to live here, and that's why I love Canada."

Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party, loves Canada "because we value community and equality. We take care of each other. Our healthcare system is one example of the way Canadians look out for one another. People across Canada have different backgrounds and different cultures. As a country, we are unified by our desire to hold the fabric of our society together."

Since Canada Place launched the campaign on June 1, Canadians have shared thoughtful, honest, touching and funny reasons why they love Canada. Canadians from coast-to-coast, from Stephenville Crossing in Newfoundland to Whitehorse in the Yukon, have added their voices to the dialogue.

"Canadians are sharing with us heartfelt, quirky and thought-provoking responses as to why they love our nation," said Mike Shardlow, President & CEO, Canada Place Corporation. "As an iconic symbol of Canada, Canada Place is honoured to lead the discussion as to why Canadians love our country and, ultimately, what makes up our identity."

### **About the *Our Canada* initiative, open through June 29:**

Prior to June 30, Canadians can participate in the *Our Canada* initiative by answering the question, "Why do you love Canada?" in a few short words. All entries – one per person only – are eligible to win two roundtrip Air Canada tickets to anywhere the airline flies in Canada.

There are three ways for Canadians to participate:

- Online: <http://www.canadaplace.ca/ourcanada>  
<http://www.canadaplace.ca/ourcanada/fr.php>
- Text: 604-767-9990
- Facebook: Write on the wall of the *Our Canada* fan page

To be eligible for the Air Canada grand prize entries must be received before midnight (PST) on June 29. For full contest rules, visit [www.canadaplace.ca/ourcanada](http://www.canadaplace.ca/ourcanada).

The top three themes identified from all the entries will be shared on July 1 during the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual *Canada Day at Canada Place* celebration in Vancouver, BC—the largest Canada Day celebration outside of Ottawa.

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**For more information:**

Brett Calder  
 Manager, Communications & Public Affairs  
 604.775.6245  
 bcalder@canadaplace.ca

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Below are a few reasons why Canadians love Canada:

I love Canada because I can speak my mind, and I can tell the world what I think and not be persecuted for it.

*David from Gatineau, QC*

To me, the spirit of being Canadian is to bring together people of different backgrounds and beliefs into one big family. Not just tolerance but acceptance. Humor. Honour. Humility.

*Ginger, Niagara Falls, ON*

It's like having the perfect boyfriend. He is loving, honest, humble, fair, breathtakingly gorgeous, and a really good cook.

*Leanne, Winnipeg, MB*

We have CBC radio....no matter where I've lived in Canada CBC has always made me feel I was at home.

*Jen, Antigonish, NS*

People say that defining Canadian identity is difficult because we describe ourselves by what we aren't rather than what we are. But, Canadian identity is not a 'thing', it is a feeling. When I travel from province to province, I feel at home and at peace. I feel Canadian.

*Jen, Guelph, ON*

Poutine. Yes, it's a heart attack in a bowl, but how can you not love a concoction of French fries, gravy and cheddar-cheese curds?

*Rudy, Montreal, QC*

Because of its multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, diverse, generous, helpful people and the natural beauty along with it. A smashing cocktail that will keep you addicted for life, ain't it?

*Nillesh, Vancouver, BC*

**ABOUT CANADA PLACE:**

Located in the heart of Vancouver's downtown harbour front, Canada Place generates over \$1 billion per year in economic activity and is the inspiring national landmark welcoming local residents, visitors and ships to the West Coast. Canada Place Corporation is the owner of Canada Place, and is the coordinating landlord for the organizations at Canada Place including the Pan Pacific Hotel, Port Metro Vancouver Cruise Ship Terminal, CN IMAX Theatre, World Trade Centre and the Vancouver Convention Centre East Facility. Canada Place Corporation also hosts a number of marquee annual community events including Canada Day and Christmas at Canada Place. Canada Place will be home to the Main Press Centre, which is part of the Main Media Centre for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. [www.canadaplace.ca](http://www.canadaplace.ca).