

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Public invited to take free journey across giant map

On Thursday, **October 16, 2008**, from **5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**, children and adults of all ages will journey across North America in a remarkably short amount of time thanks to National Geographic. The National Geographic Society is loaning a giant vinyl map, 26 feet wide by 35 feet long, to the Whitehall school district for a one-day event. The map will be set up the evening before in the gymnasium of the **Community Services Building** (formerly Whitehall High School) located at **541 East Slocum, Whitehall**. The brightly colored map may be walked on by those wearing socks. It accurately illustrates and labels the countries, bodies of water, mountains and cities throughout North America. Whitehall students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grades will use the map as they explore the continent, plan trips, learn about history, study population density and locate endangered animals. In the evening, the public is invited to experience the map free of charge.

The giant traveling map is part of a larger project called “Geography Action! Mapping the Americas.” Whitehall Middle School Teacher Susan Husiak is the coordinator of the larger project for the entire state of Michigan this year. She prepared for her role as “Teacher Consultant for National Geographic Michigan Geographic Alliance” by traveling to Washington, D.C. this summer for training. As part of the local event, 100 free toolkits are being provided to educators throughout Muskegon County. The kits include a poster of the Americas, handbook with lessons, and a CD containing activities, maps, and event planning templates. The kit is being used by thousands of educators throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, in preparation for the national “Geography Awareness Week,” November 16 – 22, 2008.

According to Husiak the map will travel to Whitehall from Mount Pleasant, Michigan where it will be displayed during the National Council of Geographic Educators. Prior to Mount Pleasant, the map was shown at the Michigan Council for Social Studies in Dearborn, Michigan.

National Geographic Giant Traveling Maps are produced by National Geographic Live!—the live events division of the National Geographic Society, producing multi-media presentations, performances, and film screenings for the general public, school audiences, and sponsoring organizations throughout North America.

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