

GoNorth! Nunavut 2009

Module 01: Arctic Exploration – Chat #3

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Welcome:

Welcome to the second chat on the topic of Arctic Exploration!

Background: Could you carry your house, food, cooking utensils, clothing, and everything else that you might need to live and survive?

Keeping the eye and mind on the goal is a must to the success of GoNorth! An enormous amount of energy, effort, resources, planning, and preparation goes into a GoNorth! expedition—in the expedition basecamp as well as the education basecamp, and even across the borders of many countries. The cumulative efforts of a team greatly outweigh those of an individual. Group cohesion and positive interaction often inspire a team to achieve far greater goals than what would be possible for just one person.

The more time teammates spend together, the better they will be able to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. Each one of us perceives the world from our own unique perspective. Interests, opinions, and thoughts are usually very different from one individual to the next. Therefore, when working within a group, it is important to consider each person when thinking about the whole, and to recognize the goals of others.

Whether we realize it or not, most of us have goals. Goals come in many different shapes and sizes. Some may be big, others small; some may be long-term and others short-term. Webster's dictionary defines a goal as "an aim or purpose." Goals can more easily be defined, however, as something that we wish to achieve. To set a goal means to begin a process in which all efforts are evaluated as to their relative importance in our lives.

The GoNorth! adventure learning expedition has several goals in its mission statement. One of them is to work with scientists around the world in the study of climate change. Have you checked out the Cool Scientist section in Logistics at Polar Husky.com? Scientists are explorers investigating the natural world! They explore, do field research, probe, and experiment to find answers to their questions, always searching for new, unexplored areas in our collective knowledge—just like the early explorers set out on ships in the fifteenth century to find new lands, map the world, and look for treasure!

Some questions to possibly open the chat with or discuss prior to the LIVE chat!

- 1) Name one place or one question that you would like to explore. Why?
- 2) Have you learned about any unusual observations on the land that have to do with climate change?
- 3) What advice would you give to an astronaut visiting a planet in a distant galaxy for the first time?
- 4) What mistakes of past explorers or scientists would you not want to repeat?

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Speaker Bio: Aaron Doering

Education Director

Aaron is a professor at the University of Minnesota where he teaches courses related to how technology can be used to enhance learning within K-16 classrooms. He has extensive experience in the development and delivery of educational content via the Internet. With a Ph.D. in instructional systems and technology and a M.S. in geography, Aaron's latest research focuses on the impact of adventure learning within the K-12 classroom, how to design and develop education courses in technology successful, how students' envision the use and need for technology, and how geospatial technologies can be used to enhance learning within science and social studies curricula.

Prior to coming to the University of Minnesota, Aaron taught middle and high school social studies in Rochester, MN taking students to more than 17 countries in order to study the physical and cultural geography of the area. His love for geography stems from his roots farming roots, as he was raised on a farm in southern Minnesota. Currently a resident of St. Paul (a big city), Aaron misses the solitude and peacefulness of rural living.

Aaron did not ease into the ranks as a Arctic explorer - he busted it! His first expedition was the 6 month, 2000 + mile dogsled expedition Arctic Transect 2004.

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GoNorth! Education Basecamp: Good Morning Everyone! We are so glad that you could join us today. This is our third chat on the topic of Arctic Exploration. Aaron is here and ready for your questions!

GoNorth! Expert: Hello everyone!

GoNorth! Expert: I'm glad you are here for the chat!

Ms Havey: Wilson WI: what is it really like traveling in the Arctic?

GoNorth! Expert: Spending time in the Arctic is absolutely beautiful. When traveling by dogsled, you respect Nature and we have the great opportunity to meet people throughout the Arctic regions. You would love it!

STAUGUSTINEOFCANTERBURY: Have you seen any Eskimos? From 1st grade student.

GoNorth! Expert: Team GoNorth! has spent a great deal of time with the Inuit in the Arctic. They are just like you and me and it is one of the best parts of the program, that is, getting to meet Arctic People.

STAUGUSTINEOFCANTERBURY: What do the dogs eat? From 1st grade student

GoNorth! Expert: The Polar Huskies eat dog food just like any other dog. However, their food is high in fat and protein as they are great athletes pulling us throughout the Arctic.

Elizabeth15: what was your first expedition like?

GoNorth! Expert: My first expedition was in 2004 when we traveled for 6 months across Nunavut. I absolutely loved it and thus the reason we are still doing it today. I fell in love with the Canadian Arctic and I'm truly looking forward to returning.

Cyan and Ella: How many hours do you normally travel during the day and can you explain what it is like to experience 24-hour sunlight? Does it make you act differently?

GoNorth! Expert: The number of hours varies depending on weather and terrain conditions as well as how good in shape the dogs and Team GoNorth! is. It usually averages from 5 - 7 hours. 24 hour sunlight is amazing! It gives one a great deal of energy and it seems like you just don't need to sleep!

Tom: cres 21 do you ever get scared?

GoNorth! Expert: Good question! Sure, I think everyone has been scared at some time. I get scared when polar bears come into camp and when the ice starts to break up. However, that is why the most important part of Adventure Learning is teamwork. We all work together to support each other.

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STAUGUSTINEOFCANTERBURY: What do you eat out there? From 2nd grader in Mrs. Pullen's class.

GoNorth! Expert: We eat lots of good food! We eat a great deal of pasta, butter, peanuts, chocolate, energy bars, peanut butter and much more. We make sure we have enough calories as it gives us energy and keeps us warm!

23: Holdin Rossing,MN, have you ever got sick on an expedition

GoNorth! Expert: Normally one does not get sick because we are traveling only with our teammates. Once in a while we get sick and we do have a medical bag just in case. Again, this is when teamwork is not important.

Cyan and Ella: Thank you for giving us a chance to travel along with you! We are interested in your food choices. Looking at your diet - what is your favorite food on the trail? And do you not get tired of eating the same food ever day?

GoNorth! Expert: Good question. I love eating the same food! Even when I'm at home I seems to eat the same thing over and over. Thus, on the trail, I love macaroni and cheese and Gorp. I think mac and cheese is my favorite!

23: Holdin Rossing,MN: have you ever fell off the sled

GoNorth! Expert: We actually don't ride on the sled. You may see a few pictures now and then of us on the back of it, but it is very rare. We always ski next to the sled so we don't weigh down the sled and most importantly, so we stay warm

RLBMS - Wellsboro, Pennsylvania: What do you have to do to prepare for the expedition?

GoNorth! Expert: Now that is a long answer! To be brief, the team works together to develop a curriculum, develop the learning environment at polarhusky.com, plan out the expedition, train the dogs, feed the dogs, acquire all the gear and food, and much, much more! It's actually quite unbelievable!

23: Holdin Rossing,MN: do you eaten snow

GoNorth! Expert: We get our water from melting snow! So, yes, every night we put snow in our tent's vestibule that we ultimately bring in and melt in our heated pots. This is used then for cooking and drinking.

Education Basecamp: Mrs Mottinger's 1st Graders: What is the most important thing you do on the expedition?

GoNorth! Expert: Good question! The most important thing is that we educate students around the world about the Arctic and how we can all learn from each other. The expedition is not about discovering a first, but about delivering the best education program to students like you! That's why you are so important!

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Kate and Kaylee: Have you ever fallen through the ice?

GoNorth! Expert: Hi Kate and Kaylee - Well, actually in 2004 my sled went through the ice. I fortunately leaped forward and didn't go through. It was my closest call and I hope it doesn't happen again :-). There are some videos of this available on the 2004 website at www.polarhusky.com/2004

23: Holdin Rossing,MN: how do you use the bathroom on the trail

GoNorth! Expert: You run outside, do your business, and run as fast as you can back in the tent!!!!!!

Jeanne Simmonds: cres,mn: how do you work technology out there when its cold out?

GoNorth! Expert: It is an important task and something we have fortunately mastered. The technology has to warm up before we can write the trail report. Thus, we bring the computers and tech inside the tent to warm up before we use it. There are some technologies like the satellite phone that work pretty good even when it is a bit cold.

AFS, Minnesota, USA: Why do you think it is important that we learn about other places? Is it more than important learning about where we live ourselves?

GoNorth! Expert: Good question. I believe that to understand us, who we are, and where we live, we must also learn about other people and places. Yes, we do need to know our own culture, heritage, and history, but to truly understand our role in the world, we need to collaborate and learn from each other.

Kate and Kaylee: What was the worst blizzard you've ever been in?

GoNorth! Expert: Well, we have been in a number of blizzards. Some of the worst last for days and fill our tent's vestibule with snow. We have to be very careful and work as a team so that the snow does not cover the tent or that the wind pushes the tent down on us were we might suffocate.

Jeanne Simmonds: cres,mn: have you came close contact with a polar bear

GoNorth! Expert: Yes. In 2004 we had a polar bear in camp and thanks to Timber and the other polar huskies, they warned us of the bear and kept it at bay!

Cres-bza: how long have you been teaching at the U of M?

GoNorth! Expert: I actually began teaching the U of M in 1999 as a graduate student. That was after I taught middle school and high school social studies for 5 years in Rochester, MN

Elizabeth15cresMN:How do you take a shower in the arctic?

GoNorth! Expert: Well, you really don't take a shower. You do take a snow bath and wash up with water. So, imagine running out into the snow and using the snow to clean off and run back in the tent!

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Elizabeth15cresMN: have you ever gotten frostbite?

GoNorth! Expert: I have had frostbite. It is nothing I'm proud of, but we had strong winds one day that caught me off guard and I didn't get my face covered. We work together as a team so this does not happen!

STAUGUSTINEOFCANTERBURY: How deep can the snow get? From 6th grader in Mrs. Sinha's class

GoNorth! Expert: The snow can get very, very deep! I actually don't know the number of feet or meters, but we have seen some incredible snowdrifts and have taken measurements where our five foot stick doesn't reach the ground!

RLBMS - Wellsboro, Pennsylvania: Alice - Which expedition was your favorite?

GoNorth! Expert: I truly have enjoyed them all. I think some of my favorites include the first Nunavut trip and Chukotka, Russia.

Veronica Barry: have you ever had any other jobs

GoNorth! Expert: I sure have! I grew up on a farm in southern Minnesota. Thus, I have worked on the farm for many years. I also paid my way through school as an auto mechanic. I worked for many shops rebuilding engines and restoring cars. I have also worked for National Geographic. I've enjoyed all my jobs!

RLBMS - Wellsboro, Pennsylvania: Jordan - Do you feel safe on the ice?

GoNorth! Expert: I do. You really don't think about it, but you make sure that safety is always the first thing on your mind and that you make wise decisions on where you travel.

Student Submitted Question: Do you enjoy doing these kinds of chats???

GoNorth! Expert: I love them! This is why we do what we do. This is more important to me than writing an article, traveling somewhere, or even teaching in a classroom somewhere. We do this program so we can collaborate with you and that we can learn together.

Tom: cres 21 who is your oldest dog?

GoNorth! Expert: The oldest dog is Nazca and she is a beautiful dog!

GoNorth! Education Basecamp: These are fabulous questions! We have about 10 minutes left....enough time for a few more questions.

AFS, Minnesota, USA: Besides from the dogs, do you carry anything else than bear bangers and bear flares in case a polar bear attacks you?

GoNorth! Expert: Yes, depending on the region of the Arctic, we also carry a gun that has flares and bangers in it. We need to make sure we don't interact with a polar bear and thus, try to make wise decisions.

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Student Submitted Question: Has the team ever had to change their route well on an expedition?

GoNorth! Expert: Yes we have. In fact, in every community we spend time with elders to get their input on the route as they know best from their traditional ecological knowledge. Thus, the route is predetermined to some extent, but not completely.

Veronica Barry: who is your youngest dog

GoNorth! Expert: The youngest dogs is Chitwa!

Madison jay CRES 12 have you ever eaten any whale meat?

GoNorth! Expert: Oh yes! It is called muktuk and it is a delicacy. It is very good!

STAUGUSTINEOFCANTERBURY: What do you wear in this type of temperature?
From Ms Rotondi's Science class

GoNorth! Expert: We are sponsored by the outdoor clothing company Ground. They provide us with some excellent gear and we also wear gear that breathes and wicks the moisture away from our skin so we don't get cold.

Woods, MN, US: Would you say you explore for yourself and other to learn? Or do you have more personal reasons? Do you like to be famous for example?

GoNorth! Expert: :-). I don't think we are famous, but thanks. Truly, in all of what we do, it is for the education program. I really would like to see more curricula in schools use this model of educating students. I actually teach a course on how to develop courses like this at the University of MN.

charlie cres: have you ever seen the northern lights

GoNorth! Expert: Yes, and they are very beautiful! It is one of the positives of traveling in the Arctic!

AFS, Minnesota, USA: We love being part of Team GoNorth! Do you think there will be more GoNorth! or will there really only be two more to go? Is it difficult to raise the money to do these programs?

GoNorth! Expert: As long as we can get funding, there will be an adventure learning program!!!! I will guarantee it. I'm so happy you are part of GoNorth! It really means a lot to all of us.

Education Basecamp: Mrs Mottinger's 1st Graders: How do the explorers get the extra food for dogs and people when they are on the trail?

GoNorth! Expert: We either mail our food resupplies to the villages where we are traveling through or we have a plane land and give us a cache drop with the resupplies.

Tom: how many sleds are there on the trails

GoNorth! Expert: It varies. This year there will be two komatek sled on the trail.

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Thank You!

From all of us at Team GoNorth!, Thank You for joining us today! Join us again next week on Thursday, March 26th at 2 PM CDT for our last chat on the topic of Arctic Exploration.