

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Minneapolis/St. Paul (January 2017)

Contact:

Ted Winner
tedawinner@gmail.com
404-735-5235

Team Changing Earth tackles second Arctic expedition to document stories of strength and hope and inspire kids worldwide to #choose2care

A University of Minnesota team is combining inspirational physical adventures with shared educational ones, as they tackle challenging paths across vast wilderness areas in the Arctic and the Tropics while documenting stories en route focused on how we find strength and purpose in an increasingly fragile, interconnected, and stressed world

The mission: Tackle an ancient path across 137 miles of Arctic wilderness from the north of Iceland to the south. Document stories en route focused on how we find strength and purpose in an increasingly fragile, interconnected, and stressed world. A team of four explorers will travel by ski and snowshoe, pulling all gear, food, and technology in large sleds called pulks. They will visit schools and talk with residents in several Icelandic communities en route, learning about the social, economic, and environmental innovations spawned on this island of fire and ice, and how people adapt and find purpose even amidst constant change. The team will share their journey online in real time with a worldwide audience, and offer a free learning portal for students and teachers.

This expedition is part of The Changing Earth (<http://thechangingearth.com>), an adventure learning series of eight expeditions over four years to remote regions of the Arctic and the Tropics. The Arctic and Tropics are facing some of the most rapid and widespread environmental and sociocultural changes on Earth. The goal of The Changing Earth is to combine an inspirational physical adventure with a shared educational one. Modern technologies enable the team to capture the adventure, land, communities, and stories through videos and photos, and share the journey online in real time with students, teachers, and the general public. Schools around the world have access to a free online learning environment with activities and resources focused on science, technology, geography, and culture. There are also collaboration and interaction zones for students, a learning zone for the general public, and a free student management system for teachers.

The first expedition, in April 2016, took the team across the far northern end of the Baffin Island in Canada. This second expedition will begin in late February 2017 in Akureyri, a small city in northern Iceland. From there, the team will travel out by ski and snowshoe, crossing the island from north to south. In the heart of Iceland, they'll traverse Sprengisandur, an ancient route between the Hofsjökull and Vatnajökull glaciers – to Landmannalaugar, an area rife with

geothermal activity. This journey will take the team across challenging terrain, not easily accessible in winter. Their final destination is the capital city of Reykjavik.

Team leader Aaron Doering (see <http://chasingseals.com>) is an adventure learning pioneer, professor, and worldwide explorer who has dogsledded and pulked throughout the circumpolar Arctic, ranging from Chukotka, Russia, to Fennoscandia, and around the globe to Greenland, Canada, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. He holds a close connection to the land, having grown up on a farm in southern Minnesota, and has a passion for educating others about our planet, and for learning from the experiences of people who live in remote regions around the globe. Doering is a fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, and the UMN Institute on the Environment. He has been honored with multiple awards and recognitions, including being a laureate of the Tech Awards (<http://www.thetech.org/tech-awards-presented-applied-materials>), which pay tribute to individuals using technology to benefit humanity.

Doering will be accompanied on this journey by three fellow adventurers and education professionals: Chris Ripken, a high school geography teacher recognized for his innovative uses of technology in the classroom; Jeni Henrickson, a creative professional and researcher passionate about getting people outdoors; and Matthew Whalen, a professional videographer and seasoned outdoorsman.

Doering notes, “In sharing adventures, educational activities, and stories of innovation from real communities around the world, we hope to engage others in discussions about the importance of these fragile regions of the planet, and inspire people to take action and choose to care about their own communities, cultures, and the environment.”

The ultimate mission of the Changing Earth is to help create an environmentally literate and socially engaged generation of learners worldwide who are able to blend traditional and 21st century scientific and cultural knowledge to generate innovative solutions to guide the Earth and its diverse inhabitants into the future.

Join in online at <http://thechangingearth.com>. The challenge begins February 2017.

The Changing Earth is a project of the Learning Technologies Media Lab (LTML). LTML is an innovative design and research center located in the College of Education and Human Development's Centers for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Minnesota. LTML's mission is to inspire and create opportunities for global collaboration in addressing humanity's most pressing educational, social, and environmental issues by designing and evaluating innovative technology-mediated solutions for learners, educators, researchers, and organizations worldwide. We are a nonprofit focused on education, educational technology, and education research, and have to date designed and developed more than two dozen free online and mobile tools and learning environments in use by over 15 million learners worldwide.