



Smithsonian and ePals Launch 2014 Junior Folklorist Challenge

Challenge invites kids 8-18 globally to explore and share cultural traditions and learn professional folklorist investigation, interview and reporting skills.

WASHINGTON, DC—April 2, 2014 - ePals Corporation, an education media company and Global Learning Network, today announced the launch of its inaugural Junior Folklorist Challenge in partnership with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. The challenge is one of several planned activities stemming from the ePals-Smithsonian partnership, which is designed to extend the global reach and student learning opportunities around the Center's annual June-July Washington D.C.-based Folklife Festival. Now open to kids eight to 18 worldwide, the challenge asks participants to examine a local or regional tradition through the eyes of a community tradition bearer and create a video, podcast or slide show to share the story.

Cultural traditions students might explore range from dance, games and handicrafts to cooking, storytelling, customs, distinctive jobs, and more. Comprehensive supporting materials reinforce real world folklorist skills by defining terms, providing examples, tips, and organizational tools, and walking students through professional interview and story-shaping processes. Participants also have access to Smithsonian professional folklorists.

"The challenge is designed to inspire students and promote critical thinking through in-the-field research that explores the richness of local traditions and unique stories of tradition bearers," says ePals CEO, Katya Andresen. "ePals is delighted to join forces with the Smithsonian to offer this original and exciting challenge for students around the globe."

Accompanying teacher or parent materials include lesson plans, global collaboration opportunities, a standards-alignment chart and scoring rubric. The process reinforces a range of 21st-century skills, including the use of digital technologies, and U.S. and international social studies, language, and interdisciplinary curriculum standards.

"The junior folklorist challenge invites children to see their communities in new ways and to actively participate in preserving traditions for later generations," says Michael Atwood Mason, director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. "We believe this collaboration will extend the reach of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and engage millions of students in cultural heritage around the world."

The challenge deadline is May 26, 2014, with winners chosen by a panel of Smithsonian and ePals judges. Among the prizes for student winners whose entries best demonstrate the folklorist process of investigation and reporting are a publishing opportunity in ePals Media's *Faces* magazine, digital video cameras, box sets from the Smithsonian Folkways collection, and more. For details and a submission form, visit: www.epals.com/challenges/folklife2014/.

About ePals Corporation

ePals Corporation (TSXV: SLN) is an education media company and Global Learning Network. Focused on the K-12 market, ePals offers school administrators, teachers, students and parents worldwide trusted content, interactive learning experiences, and a collaborative learning community. ePals' award-winning products include: popular children's educational publishing brands from toddlers to teens, including Cricket® and Cobblestone®; the ePals Global Community®; and In2Books®, a Common Core eMentoring program that builds reading, writing and critical thinking skills. ePals also offers SchoolMail365 premium services. New is a full service content-licensing, clearance and production service for education publishers. ePals serves approximately one million classrooms and reaches millions of teachers, students and parents in 222 countries and territories. Product websites include: www.epals.com; www.cricketmag.com; and In2Books.com.

About the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage is dedicated to the collaborative research, presentation, preservation, conservation and continuity of traditional knowledge and artistry with diverse contemporary cultural communities in the United States and around the world. The Center produces the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival and Folkways Recordings, maintains and makes accessible the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, produces extensive research and educational materials, and promotes cultural heritage policy for the benefit of communities around the world. For more information about the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, visit Folklife.si.edu.

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