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Orbis Canada's Plane Pull for Sight Goes Virtual

Combining a virtual flight on the world's only Flying Eye Hospital with an interactive online team building experience, Canadian charity launches first-of-its-kind fundraising experience.

TORONTO, August 27, 2020 – Every spring for the last 11 years, thousands of Canadians have come together to participate in the ultimate tug-of-war challenge; pulling a 60-tonne FedEx 757 cargo plane 20 feet across the tarmac as quickly as possible.

This year, COVID-19 caused the spring Orbis Plane Pull for Sight to be postponed. With the rescheduled autumn dates quickly looking as if they too would be canceled, the teams at Orbis Canada and the event's National Sponsor, FedEx, pivoted to create an interactive and engaging experience that brings teams together for a one-of-a-kind virtual fundraiser.

"For more than 30 years, FedEx has been dedicated to supporting Orbis in their mission to eliminate preventable blindness around the world," said Lisa Lisson, president of FedEx Express Canada. "I'm very proud of all our wonderful FedEx participants and volunteers who continue to rally behind this wonderful cause, and excited about this year's virtual event, which will allow more Canadians to participate and learn more about the vital work Orbis does worldwide," she added.

Combining a series of video and virtual flight simulation elements with live skill-testing games and interactive team competitions, the Virtual Plane Pull for Sight aims to provide a unique and engaging team building experience for all those who participate. Taking place Sept. 12 – 14, 2020, the virtual event brings teams together in a digital space for a sneak peek behind the scenes of Orbis's iconic Flying Eye Hospital (a fully-accredited teaching hospital on board an MD-10 aircraft). Teams will work together to complete various challenges as they compete against their fellow teams for special prizes and lots of bragging rights.

"When we realized this year's event could not proceed as usual, we wanted to create something unique to replace our Plane Pull for Sight events," says Orbis Canada CEO, Lisa McKeen. "Everyone is missing time with friends and colleagues. Our Virtual Plane Pull provides an opportunity to work together in a way that's challenging and fun, and which can be done in the comfort of your own home. By combining elements of virtual reality, flight simulation and skill-testing trivia, we're doing something that's truly a first-of-its-kind fundraiser for Canada."

Like many charities, Orbis Canada has faced a funding shortfall as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Having to completely cancel the Plane Pull for Sight events would have meant an enormous hit to their revenues. Instead, this new virtual alternative allows the charity to

continue to offer a unique aviation-themed fundraiser and to bring in much-needed funds for their sight-saving work.

“Orbis brings people together around the world to fight avoidable blindness,” says McKeen. “We work with a network of partners to mentor, train and inspire local teams to fight blindness in their communities. The pandemic has had a devastating impact in many of the places where we support programming, so the need has never been greater.”

Learn more about the Orbis Virtual Plane Pull for Sight at PullForSight.ca.

Interviews and media tours of the experience are available.

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About Orbis:

Orbis Canada is an affiliate of Orbis International, a global nonprofit organization that brings people together to fight avoidable blindness, restore vision and help ensure no one loses their sight to a preventable, treatable disease. Using its unique tools – over 400 expert medical volunteers, the world’s only Flying Eye Hospital, and an online telemedicine training and consultation platform, Cybersight – Orbis equips developing nations with the skills, resources and knowledge to deliver high-quality eye care to their own people. In collaboration with a global network of local partners, including hospitals, universities, government agencies and ministries of health, Orbis creates long-term, sustainable eye care solutions by providing hands-on ophthalmology training, strengthening health care infrastructure and advocating to make eye health a priority. For more information visit can.orbis.org/en

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