**Franco-Ontarians, 400 years in the making**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**COME AND JOIN THE CELABRATIONS!**

CITY, DATE

**WHY**:

**WHO:**

**WHAT:**

**WHERE:**

**WHEN:**

-30-

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

NOM

COORDONNÉES

COURRIEL

SITE INTERNET

**Who we are:**

**WHO WE ARE**

Statistiques démographiques et année de fondation

**President :**

Nom et courte biographie + photo

**Our Mission**

**A bit of history**

The period from 1610 to 1615 marks the beginning of the French presence in Ontario.

Étienne Brûlé, scout and interpreter for Samuel de Champlain, is thought to be the first Caucasian to have reached the area that is present-day Ontario. In the summer of 1610, he set out to explore the Pays d’en Haut (“upper country”), a region of New France that encompassed the majority of Ontario and beyond. He travelled up the Ottawa River, reaching Lake Nipissing by the Mattawa River, and ending his journey in Huronia, going as far as Georgian Bay via the French River. Along with his First Nations allies, the Hurons, he set off to explore several regions surrounding the Great Lakes, and would later report his discoveries of this countryside, rich in natural resources and expansive freshwater seas, to Champlain.

In May 1613, Champlain went in search of a “northern sea” (Hudson Bay). Accompanied by Brûlé and three other young scouts, he travelled up the Ottawa River as far as Allumette Island, Quebec, in the vicinity of Pembroke, Ontario. He took advantage of this journey to build alliances with an Algonquin tribe, the Kichesipirini, and then returned to Quebec City. It was during this journey that Champlain lost his astrolabe, which would be found 254 years later, in 1867, by Edward Lee, a 14-year-old farm boy.

It wasn’t until 1615 that Champlain would follow Brûlé as far as Huronia. Brûlé also took him to explore northern Lake Ontario, as far as the Bay of Quinte. He took the same route, the great trade route, to reach the heart of the Huron country on the banks of Georgian Bay. It was during this journey to the Bay of Quinte that he was wounded by an arrow to the knee during a battle with the Iroquois, and was forced to winter with his Huron-Wendat allies until spring 1616 before returning to Quebec.

Background

Back in 2009, the French community was consulted on how to make the years 2013 to 2015 a big splash to commemorate 400 years of French presence in Ontario. Fallowing that, a structure and specific goals were elaborated. A steering committee was put in place. Its members are part of the French community from all parts of Ontario.

Goals:- Ensure that the French language and the Franco-Ontarian community’s culture are passed on to future generations

-Expand the francophone space in all regions of Ontario

-Promote the visibility and valorize the use of French throughout Ontario

-Contribute to the flourishing of the Franco-Ontarian community as well as the betterment of Ontario society

-Build the Franco-Ontarian community’s capacity to act and grow in every area of development

**You want to know more?**

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