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Alaskan students discover Reef through video technology

Reef HQ Education Manager Fred Nucifora will enable 31 students from remote northern Alaska to experience the Great Barrier Reef without stepping outside their classroom tomorrow.

This will be made possible thanks to Reef Videoconferencing technology being used at the Education Department of Reef HQ Aquarium, Townsville.

“Venetie is a small and remote Athabaskan Indian village located approximately 56 miles above the Arctic Circle,” Mr Nucifora said.

The local school district has this year installed videoconferencing technology to enable teachers to introduce students to the outside world.”

Ms Gretchen Frank, a teacher at John Fredson School, said she was thrilled at the possibility of opening up the world to her students.

“With a total population of 200, our village culture is focused on subsistence that includes hunting, trapping and fishing. However, technology is a key educational tool for the school.”

Mr Nucifora, who fields videoconferencing enquiries from schools around the world, said this was the most remote location his team had contacted via videoconference.

“The John Fredson School is an example of how distance is no longer a barrier to education, “ he said.

“Reef Videoconferencing provides students with an opportunity to interact live with a scuba diver and see thousands of reef creatures

“These children may not have the opportunity to visit the Great Barrier Reef, but through a Reef Videoconference they have every opportunity to appreciate it and discover what makes it so unique.”

Since Reef HQ began offering a Reef Videoconference program, the number of schools from across the globe experiencing the Great Barrier Reef has grown.

The Reef Videoconferences are conducted from the depths of both the predator and coral reef exhibits of the Aquarium. Through the use of an underwater camera, staff can bring people from around the world up close to a wide variety of marine life and corals whilst also providing live commentary.

“Our videoconferencing program has been running for six years now and with more and more educational facilities installing the technology, schools across the world are now able to experience the Reef, “ Mr Nucifora said.

The conference will run between 9am and 10am on Wednesday 8 March. Students participating in the Reef Videoconference will be able to be interviewed by media immediately after the conference finishes.

Photo Opportunities:

- Alaskan students live on TV in Reef HQ Videoconference studio.
- Reef HQ divers underwater streaming live to Alaska.

Further Information:

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