

CANADIAN TEENS DON'T THINK SCIENCE IS 'COOL' **Only One Third of Canadian Teens are Interested in Pursuing a Post-Secondary Science Education**

MISSISSAUGA, ON (November 9, 2010) – Science and technology-based careers may have exploded in recent years, but Canada's youth have little interest in studying science after they graduate from high school. According to a new Angus Reid Vision Critical survey, only **one in three** (37 per cent) Canadian teens aged 16 to 18 are interested in taking a science course at the post-secondary level – and these are teens who are currently enrolled in at least one high school science course.

This is a surprising statistic, especially given that more than **eight out of 10** (82 per cent) teens recognize that studying science opens many different career options and believe that if fewer students pursue science it will have an impact on our society long-term (84 per cent). Across the country Canadians agree, with nearly 90 per cent saying that young people's interest in science is essential for Canada's future prosperity.

"There is clearly a disconnect between Canadians' theoretical belief in the value of a science education and students' actual intentions," said Bonnie Schmidt, president and founder of Let's Talk Science, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the importance of science learning. "We need to encourage more teens to pursue science and technology learning at high school and post-secondary levels. The reality is that science education opens many more doors for career opportunities than people realize. A basic understanding of science is also needed for everyday life."

The problem may be that Canadian teens do not think of science as 'cool'. According to the survey, Canadian teens perceive people working in science related professions as intelligent (81 per cent) and serious (54 per cent), but only **four per cent** think they are 'cool'. Yet, the number and variety of science-related careers available to youth today is higher than it has ever been before – and go beyond the obvious careers in medicine and computer technology. Science can lead to careers in the sports and entertainment industry or the business and financial world.

W. Brett Wilson, Chairman of both Prairie Merchant Corporation & CANOE Financial LP and a scientist and entrepreneur, wants to help Canadian youth see the value and 'cool' factor of science. "The scientific skills learned at the high-school and post-secondary levels are critically important to virtually every career area," said Mr. Wilson. "For me, studying science as part of my engineering degree has made a world of difference in my success. I use those skills every day in my own business, and in analyzing the potential value and utility of new business ideas. Now I am encouraging my own children, who have all taken sciences at a post-secondary level, to leverage those skills in whatever career paths they might choose."

Bringing Science to the Forefront

Partnerships like those between Let's Talk Science and Amgen Canada are essential when trying to raise awareness of the importance of a science education among Canadian youth. According to the survey, **eight out of 10** Canadian teens said that having access to mentors or assistance with homework would help them be more successful in science. Let's Talk Science is a pioneer in developing programs that stimulate the interest of young people in science, including outreach programs that provide role models and real-world experiences in science and

CurioCity (www.curiocity.ca), an interactive 'place' tailor-made for teens to explore and discover the science, engineering and technology in their lives. At CurioCity, teens have access to insightful articles that relate to their own interests and activities, such as health issues, technology, entertainment, sports and relationships, as well as a careers profile section that highlights the integral role science plays in career opportunities.

"Making science relevant is key to helping teens see the possibilities science brings to their own future," said Dr. Schmidt. "Resources, like CurioCity, take science to where teens are – online and mobile – so they can explore science in ways that are meaningful to them. It's very exciting, and the feedback by those who have used the website is very encouraging."

Supporting educators in an effort to engage students in science in novel ways is also important – especially given that **70 per cent** of teens say their science teachers have influenced their perception of science. The Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence (AASTE) recognizes four outstanding Canadian science teachers each year for their extraordinary contribution to elevating science literacy through creativity and innovation in the classroom.

"As we move towards a knowledge-based economy, we need to work together with supporters of science education to ensure our youth understand its importance, as well as make the connection between cutting-edge science and its everyday applications," said Karen Burke, director of regulatory affairs, Amgen and vice-president, Canadian Society for Chemistry.

"At Amgen Canada, we are committed to raising the value of science literacy in Canada and hope to attract bright young minds into the field of science for many years to come," continues Daniel Billen, Vice President and General Manager of Amgen Canada.

About Let's Talk Science

Let's Talk Science is an award-winning, national, charitable, science outreach organization. Let's Talk Science creates and delivers science learning programs and services that turn kids on to science, keep them engaged in learning and develop their potential to become 21st century stewards, innovators and citizens. For more information about Let's Talk Science, please visit www.letstalkscience.ca.

About Amgen Canada

As a leader in innovation, Amgen Canada understands the value of science. With main operations located in Mississauga, Ontario's vibrant biomedical cluster, and its research facility in Burnaby, British Columbia, Amgen Canada has been an important contributor to advancements in science and innovation in Canada since 1991. The company contributes to the development of new therapies or new uses for existing medicines in partnership with many of Canada's leading health-care, academic, research, government and patient organizations. To learn more about Amgen Canada, visit www.amgen.ca.

Survey Methodology

*From May 14th to May 18th, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among a sample of **502 Canadian high school students aged 16-18** whose parents are Angus Reid Forum panel members. The sample was statistically balanced to age, gender and region according to the most current Census data and the dataset has been weighted by region to ensure a sample representative of the 16-18 year population of Canada. The margin of error is $\pm 4.38\%$, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

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