

let's talk 
science

Annual Report 2016-2017



Developing Leaders

Message from the President and Board Chair

As we look to the future in times of global complexity and change, it's critical to focus on educating youth. Helping them develop the skills and characteristics needed to thrive and lead in the coming decades is the ultimate goal of Let's Talk Science.

Canada's education systems are among the best in the world, but we cannot be complacent. We all – educators, businesses, community organizations, individuals and governments – have important roles to play. As a national partner in education, Let's Talk Science supports youth development by engaging them in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), building essential competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and leadership.

With only five million school-aged youth in Canada we must strive to engage them all. During 2016-17, nearly 43% of Canadian schools

accessed at least one Let's Talk Science program. Our reach grew to over 914,000 youth interactions. Beyond the numbers, we had a significant positive impact on people's lives, some of which is highlighted in this report. Across all audiences, our evaluations show that Let's Talk Science improves attitudes, builds confidence and supports the development of key skills. For some of our volunteers, we even help launch careers.

Through our continued commitment to seek out partnerships with other like-minded organizations, we have been able to achieve even greater impact. This year we developed a coding lesson with Ladies Learning Code, created educator resources with Canada Science and Technology Museum to support classroom use of 3D printers and expanded our work with Frontier College to include career programming for teens. We partnered with You Be the Chemist to bring more chemistry resources to classrooms across Canada. We engaged more high school students in genomics and DNA barcoding with

the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics. We worked with Shaftesbury/Smokebomb and Shift2 to develop Emerald Code, a new scripted web series and a complementary documentary, to inspire girls in coding.

With the goal of closing Canada's sesquicentennial celebrations with an ambitious vision for the future, Canada 2067 kicked off with more than 150,000 online responses from people who want to shape the future of STEM learning. Five regional youth summits and a national leadership conference will be held during 2017-18.

It has been an inspiring year at Let's Talk Science! We are indebted to our board of directors, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters for their ongoing commitment. We thank the Government of Canada for its transformational support, enabling us to significantly expand our reach. Without our supporters, our work would not be possible. Together we are inspiring and developing creative, critical thinkers who will lead Canada into the future.

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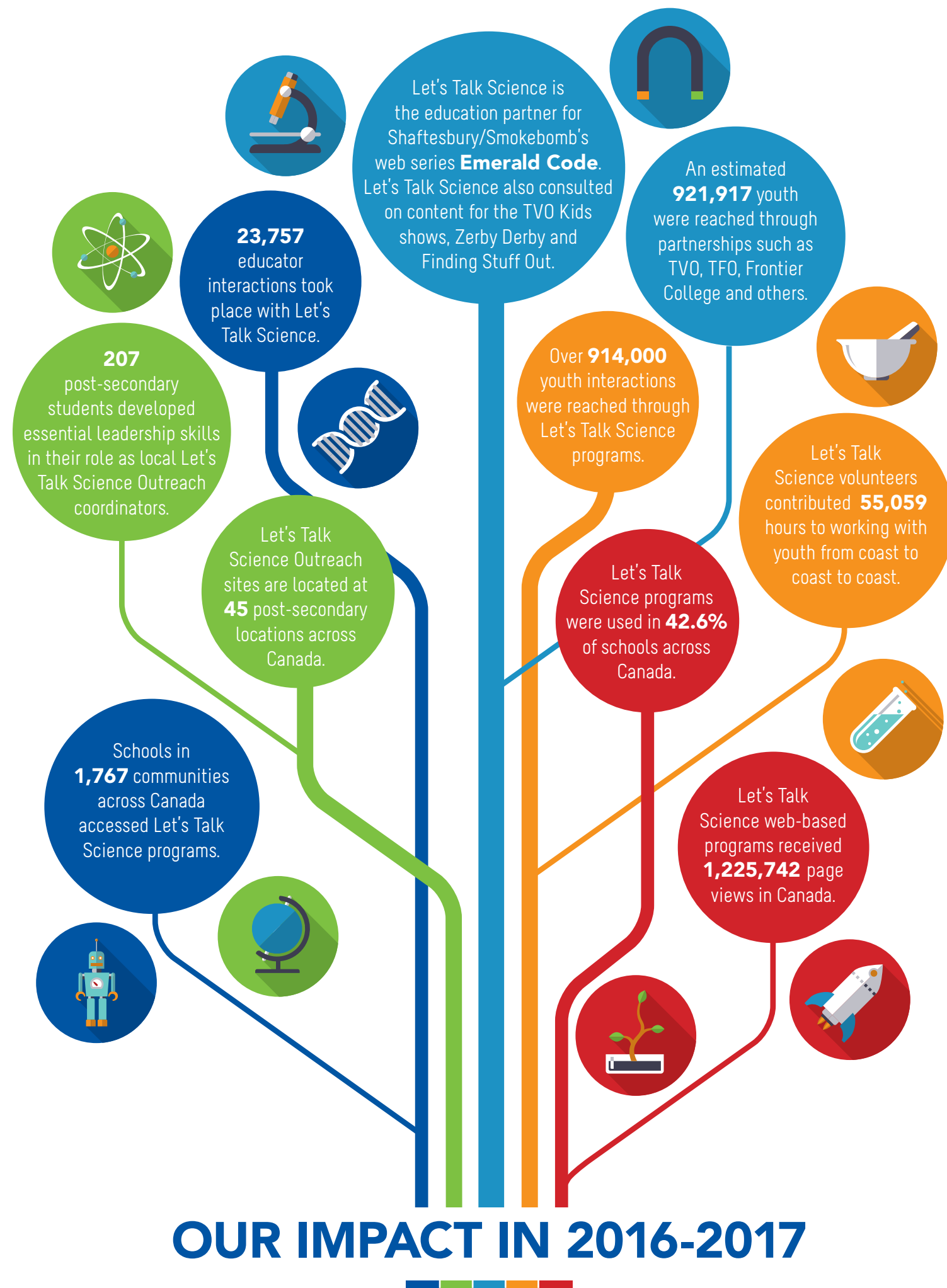
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Science as Sport with the Let's Talk Science Challenge

Science isn't just for school. When presented in a highly engaging way, it's also an exciting team sport - a way to help students build skills like collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

That's the goal of the Let's Talk Science Challenge, an extra-curricular competition for students in Grades 6-8. In 2016-2017, Let's Talk Science held its first ever Défi Parlons sciences event in French at l'Université de Sherbrooke in Sherbrooke, Quebec.

The Let's Talk Science Challenge enriches knowledge, builds skills and motivates students. Zoé St-Pierre, age 12, said the fun event "allowed me to love science even more."



This year, over 500 post-secondary students volunteered at the 24 Challenge events in cities across the country. Over 3,437 Grade 6-8 students from 310 schools took part in the Challenge.

Let's Talk Science Programs – for Youth and Educators

When young Canadians are inspired, they see themselves and their world in a new light and are motivated to take on challenges. Let's Talk Science programs tap into their curiosity, help them build skills, and forge critical connections between science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and education communities. In 2016-2017, Let's Talk Science worked with educators and communities to expand our programming and increase our reach to Kindergarten to Grade 12 youth across Canada.

Let's Talk Science Outreach Volunteers Reach Out to Engage and Excite

At Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Annamarie Hudlin understands the spark of education. She is the site coordinator for Let's Talk Science Outreach and has helped deliver workshops at elementary schools throughout Ontario's Niagara region.

"It's fulfilling to know that our outreach makes a difference by helping children and youth in Niagara see how fun and applicable STEM is in their lives," said Hudlin.

Let's Talk Science Outreach is a national program that mobilizes volunteers across Canada to visit classrooms and community settings to lead engaging hands-on STEM learning experiences. In 2016-2017, Brandon University in Manitoba and Lakehead University in Ontario joined as Let's Talk Science Outreach sites, increasing the program's overall network to 45 post-secondary institutions.

In 2016-2017, our Outreach volunteers devoted nearly **54,000 hours, valued at over \$1 million of in-kind support, to bring STEM to life for children and youth.**

CurioCity Ignites Curiosity

Connecting teens to real world STEM involves hands-on projects, relevant content and interactions with STEM professionals.

In 2016-2017, high school students became citizen scientists through one of CurioCity's action projects, the Fish Market Survey, offered in partnership with the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics. Seeking to do practical work that matters, students collected tissue samples for genomics analysis and determined if their local supermarket fish were labeled accurately.

The fish market survey found that **13% of fish were mislabelled.**

"They learned some technically-advanced processes, such as DNA barcoding," said Heidi Kavanagh, a teacher at Mealy Mountain Collegiate in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador. Kavanagh said her biology class was thrilled by the chance to make science come to life. "Sometimes it's hard to stimulate teenagers but this definitely did the job."



CurioCity by Let's Talk Science includes action projects, articles, videos, career profiles and other resources, that show Grade 8-12 students how STEM is relevant to their lives.



"We know the power of storytelling to change lives. We believe that Emerald Code can do just that – by empowering girls and young women."

- Christina Jennings, Chairman and CEO, Shaftesbury/Smokebomb

During 2016-2017, Let's Talk Science partnered with production company Shaftesbury, digital studio Smokebomb Entertainment, branded entertainment agency Shift2 and Shaw Rocket Fund to create a 20-part web series called Emerald Code.

Emerald Code focuses on 15-year-old Simone Lang, who is amazed at everything she can create after discovering web design and programming at summer camp. She inspires her friends to do the same, and they realize they have tons of ideas and inventions to make their high school lives easier. The series is geared to help girls pursue their interests in STEM.

IdeaPark Professional Learning Inspires Teachers

Teachers work hard to fuel their students' learning. Sometimes they need some inspiration themselves. IdeaPark by Let's Talk Science offers resources and professional learning opportunities to support early years and primary grade educators.

In the fall of 2016, Let's Talk Science partnered with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and Le Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (CSFP) to support the implementation of a renewed Grade 2 and 4 science curriculum. The roll out, supported by Hibernia Management and Development Company Ltd., engaged 574 educators from across the province.

Let's Talk Science offered customized workshops to build educator proficiency in planning and assessing a student-centred, inquiry-based program. The goal – apply best practices for developing students' problem solving and critical thinking skills.

"Let's Talk Science provides us with an opportunity to stretch our scientific literacy vocal cords - and the confidence and inspiration to talk about science more comfortably in our classrooms."

- Allison Osmond, Paradise Elementary, Paradise, NL, NLESD, Grade 4

"It is refreshing to have a PL opportunity that reflects how a science class should look. Teachers are students too – it's great to work/learn in a hands on environment"

- Paul Murphy, St. Augustine's Elementary, Bell Island, NL, NLESD, Grade 4



On average, confidence levels for educators to do hands-on/minds-on activities with students increased by 17% for Grade 2 educators and 21% for Grade 4 educators.



Tomatosphere™ Takes Flight

What's the effect of outer space on tomato seed germination?

Over 16,628 classrooms reaching 415,700 students from all across Canada used the Tomatosphere™ program in 2016-2017 to answer this question.

Tomatosphere™ is a seed investigation program operated by Let's Talk Science. The program, which introduced a new website and more educator resources during the 2016-2017 year, teaches students the skills and processes of scientific inquiry.

"Tomatosphere is amazing," said Grade 8 student Adam Stamler of École Stonewall Centennial School in Stonewall, Manitoba, who was involved in the project. "It's more engaging than anything we could read in a book."

Classmate Carter Ives was so excited that he planted seedlings in his own garden at home and recorded their growth. "I learned so much from the program," he said. "It sparked my imagination. I started thinking about all the opportunities for growing food in space. I definitely want a career in agriculture one day."





Programming the Canadarm

For Canada Learning Code Week in June 2017, Let's Talk Science partnered with Ladies Learning Code to create a coding lesson called Canadarm2. In this popular lesson, students assumed the role of Canadarm2 controllers aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

The lesson gave students a chance to code using a real-world theme and it connected students to former Canadian Space Agency astronaut Chris Hadfield through pre-recorded videos. Using Scratch, a programming language, students planned a sequence of movements for Canadarm2. The goal was to enable its grappling hand to travel from its starting location to grab items from the payload bay of the Space Shuttle. Programming the Canadarm gave students an invaluable hands-on coding lesson.



Building Digital Literacy

Coding the Future

Let's Talk Science Outreach volunteers are helping youth build computational thinking skills. Grade 5-6 students at J.S. Buchanan Public School in Strathroy, Ontario were one group that learned to code with Let's Talk Science.

The students learned skills beyond coding. "They worked together to use different strategies and perspectives to solve a problem. They persisted when things didn't work out the first time. And they gained confidence," said Tammy Earley, an educator at J.S. Buchanan Public School. Earley said students liked the chance to do something people might think about as "an adult's job". She also appreciated that the volunteers were female, demonstrating that coding and computer science isn't just for boys.



Young Canadians need digital skills to help prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow, in their daily lives and as engaged citizens. In 2016-2017, Let's Talk Science offered more opportunities to build computational skills and digital literacy in the classroom.

Technology Resources Come to Classrooms Through #ICT4All

How can teachers promote digital literacy in the classroom? In June 2017, the Canadian Leadership Taskforce on Education and Skills, chaired by Let's Talk Science President, Dr. Bonnie Schmidt, announced a new initiative called #ICT4All.

The online database, developed by the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC), offers

educators leading-edge information and communications technology tools and resources that support digital literacy and engage students in STEM. That includes a variety of Let's Talk Science programs.

Stay tuned – the Taskforce is now working on a world-class digital literacy framework.



In July 2017, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Patricia Hajdu and Members of Parliament Kate Young and Peter Fragiskatos visited the Let's Talk Science national office to try our new Coding for the Future activity.

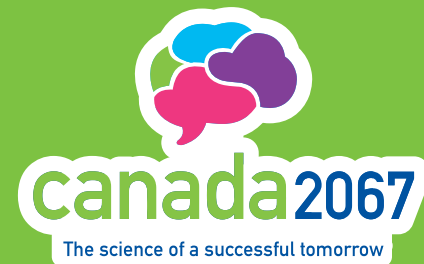


Are Canadian Youth Ready for Tomorrow's Challenges?

As identified through the Spotlight on Science Learning reports, approximately 70% of Canada's top jobs – from health care to skilled trades – now require some level of STEM. That number will only grow. Yet today most Canadian youth disengage from STEM studies before high school graduation.

CONSIDER:

- ➔ Less than 50% of high school students graduate with senior STEM courses.
- ➔ For every 100 Grade 12 students, 47 take academic math, 46 take biology, 30 take chemistry and 19 take physics.
- ➔ Only 22% of Canadian youth express a lot of interest in pursuing science at the post-secondary level.
- ➔ Only 12% are very interested in working in science-related jobs.
- ➔ Yet when considering careers, 84% of teens say they want to make a useful contribution to society and 70% want to solve problems – values they can fulfill with STEM-based jobs.



As the country celebrated its 150th anniversary of Confederation, Canada 2067 was launched as a bold nation-building initiative to evolve Canadian education by enhancing student exposure and access to STEM disciplines across all areas of learning. New approaches and actions can help ensure Canadian youth are as prepared as possible for the rapidly changing world.

Research to Catalyze Change

How can we raise awareness about the importance of STEM learning and help youth engage in it – now, and for the rest of their lives?

Let's Talk Science has played a key thought leadership role, in part, through the research series called Spotlight on Science Learning. Starting in 2010, with support from partner Amgen Canada, Let's Talk Science embarked on a journey to better understand the state of science learning in Canada. Multiple reports over the subsequent years have

shed light on science abilities, interests, attitudes and trends.

These reports have identified benchmarks to track science learning in Canada, the economic impact of dropping high school science and math, how and when youth make education and work decisions, and the parental influence on these choices. Now this landmark work has led to Canada 2067, an initiative to create a national action plan and vision for youth science learning.

A National Conversation

Canada 2067 asked policy makers, educators, parents, industry leaders, non-profit organizations and youth to share their voices. With development taking place during 2016-2017, this effort has three key prongs:

1. conversations with people across Canada (in-person and online) to develop Canada 2067 goals;
2. a series of youth summits and roundtables, and
3. a national conference in December 2017.

THE GOAL: a consensus-based action plan for implementation.

Canada 2067 is presented by Let's Talk Science and made possible by founding partners 3M Canada, Amgen Canada, Hill+Knowlton Strategies and The Trottier Family Foundation.

"Our legacy will be inspiring the innovators, entrepreneurs, citizens and discoverers who will lead our country forward," said Bonnie Schmidt, President of Let's Talk Science.



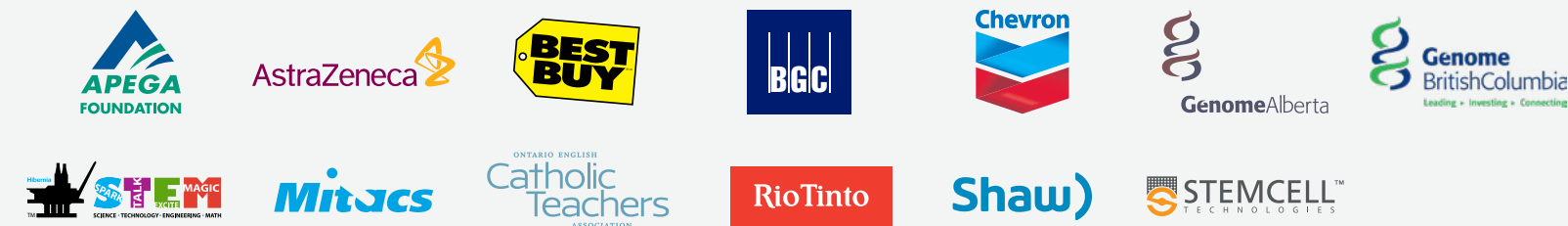
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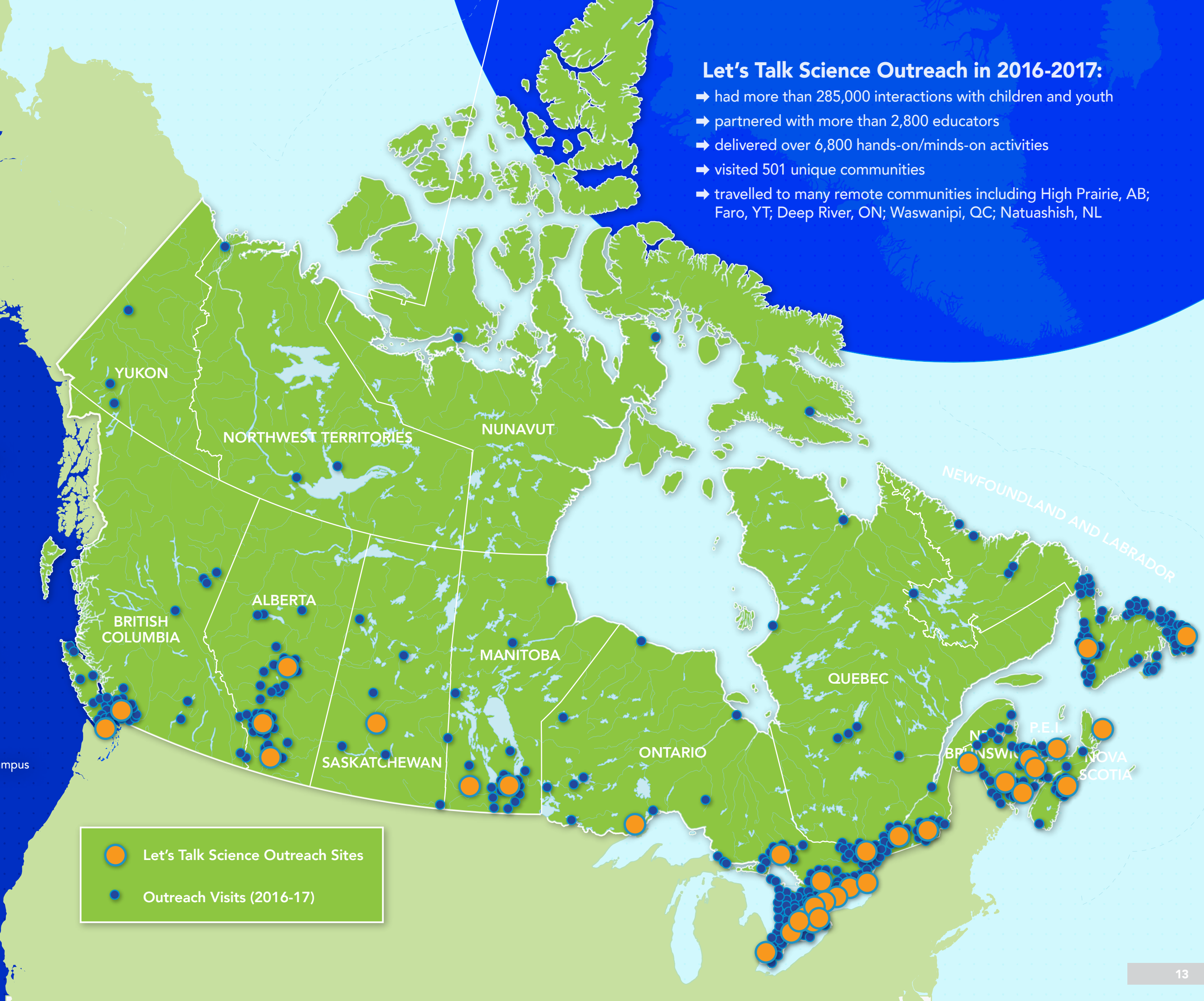
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 Mount Allison University
 University of Windsor
 Loyalist College
 Ryerson University
 Université de Moncton
 Université de Moncton, Edmunston campus
 Brock University

New 2016-2017

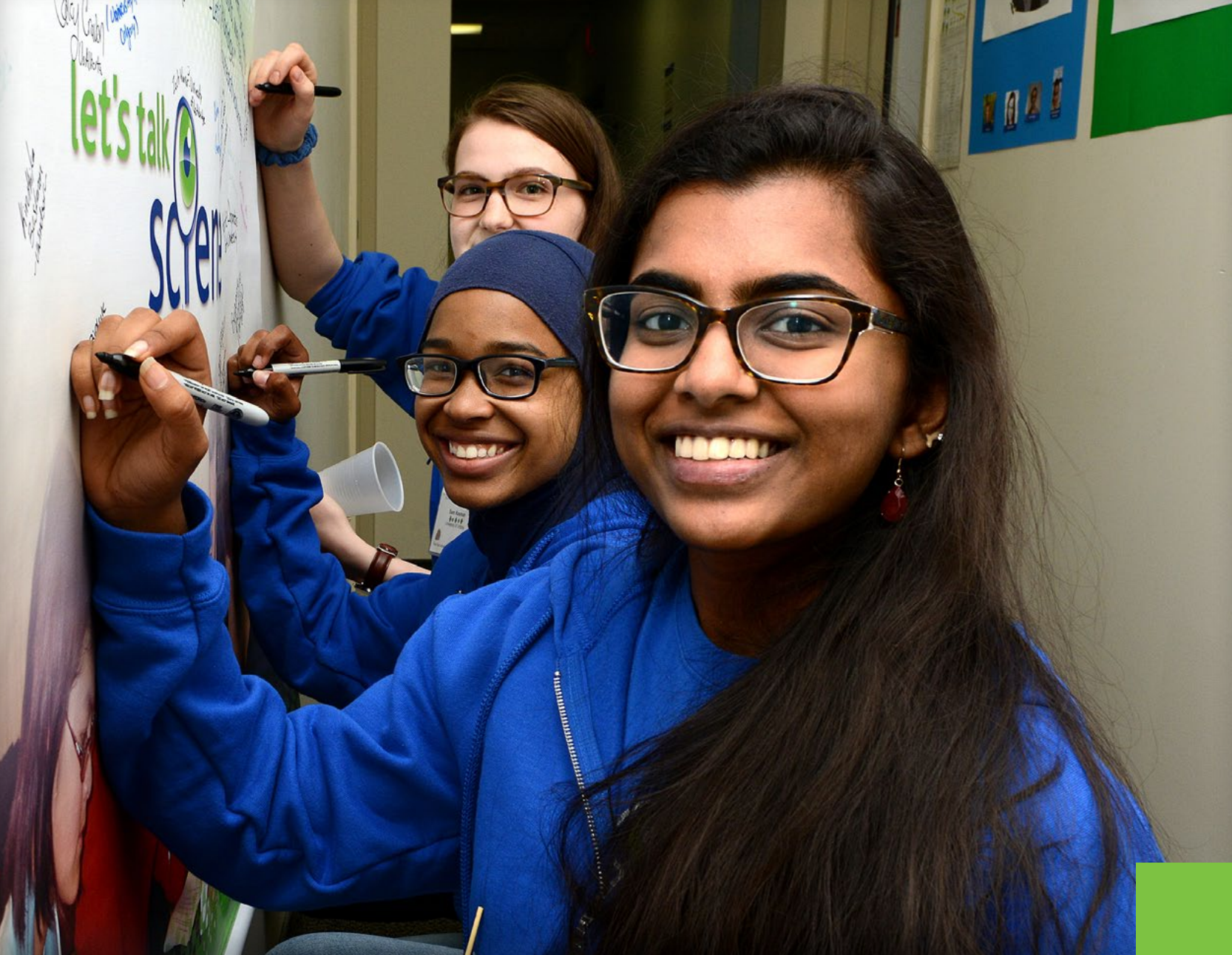
Brandon University
 Lakehead University, Orillia campus
 Lakehead University, Thunder Bay campus

Let's Talk Science Outreach in 2016-2017:

- ➔ had more than 285,000 interactions with children and youth
- ➔ partnered with more than 2,800 educators
- ➔ delivered over 6,800 hands-on/minds-on activities
- ➔ visited 501 unique communities
- ➔ travelled to many remote communities including High Prairie, AB; Faro, YT; Deep River, ON; Waswanipi, QC; Natuashish, NL



 Let's Talk Science Outreach Sites
 Outreach Visits (2016-17)



Get a View of Exciting Careers

Sometimes, students need help picturing themselves in a job. Let's Talk Science gives them that opportunity with 360-degree career videos that include aviation, mining, logging and video game development. The virtual reality viewers give students a unique perspective to help them step into various STEM careers.

A New Frontier for Career Directions

Thanks to an ongoing partnership with Frontier College, Let's Talk Science developed STEM career resources for high school students and facilitators that were piloted at two summer camps in 2016-2017. Let's Talk Science also completed three training sessions for Frontier College counsellors on incorporating STEM into their summer camps. Those took place in Thunder Bay, Ontario; Tsuu T'ina, Alberta; and Winnipeg, Manitoba. As a result, the Let's Talk Science-developed programming was used approximately 350 times by camp staff.



Career Readiness

To open doors to opportunities, it's vital to raise awareness of STEM-based careers and how jobs in every field call for STEM abilities – and then help young people develop the skills to be ready for them. That includes technical skills as well as transferrable skills, like critical thinking, creativity and problem solving. Let's Talk Science gives students of all ages that foundation, including the volunteers who deliver programs.

A Career Kick Start

When youth are exposed to stimulating learning, the results can be eye-opening. Let's Talk Science Outreach engages students from Preschool to Grade 12 in activities that spur their interest in science and STEM-based careers. But it isn't just students that benefit from the program. Let's Talk Science Outreach coordinators are responsible for the day-to-day management of the program.

"It has helped me grow in capacities I never knew I was capable of," said Reem Ghaleb, coordinator for Let's Talk Science Outreach at the University of Calgary in Alberta. "I feel like I'm running a small business, which is huge for a student. You learn so many skills. While peers in my class have been just learning about these theories, I've been practicing them."

Visit explorecuriosity.org/VRcareers to learn more!

Aspiring Astronaut Credits Let's Talk Science Volunteer Role

Aaron Persad, a Let's Talk Science Outreach volunteer at the University of Toronto, applied to the Canadian Space Agency's (CSA) Astronaut Recruitment Program in 2016.

"The CSA recognizes the Let's Talk Science name and knows what it takes to run an activity for them. It helped to say I volunteer for an organization that brings science to youth and the public. The skills to be an astronaut include the ability to work with and motivate others, resourcefulness and being able to communicate why science is important. These are all skills I've developed as a Let's Talk Science volunteer."





Forging a New Path

To develop students' interests in STEM, educators have to plot all sorts of routes. In 2016-2017, students from Kingsway Park Public School in Thunder Bay, Ontario took part in the final phase of an Indigenous Interpretive Trail Map project with Let's Talk Science Outreach volunteers at Confederation College.

More than 30 Grade 8 students collected water samples and documented locations of plant species at Kingfisher Lake. The students analyzed their data using the Geographic Information Systems Lab at Confederation College.

Funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation was critical for expanding Let's Talk Science Outreach programming to more Indigenous, rural and remote youth across Ontario. The funding also allowed Let's Talk Science to introduce students to career pathways they may not have previously imagined.



Impact on Students in Remote Communities



Making Magic in Moberly Lake

In May 2017, children and families from the Sauteau and West Moberly First Nations took part in activities planned by Let's Talk Science. The event marked the two-year partnership between Let's Talk Science, the community and Moberly Lake Elementary School in British Columbia.

Throughout the school year, students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 explored STEM during Let's Talk Science Outreach trips to the school, made possible with support from Shell Canada, Chevron Canada and CH2M Foundation.

The May celebration allowed families to enjoy fun activity stations and learn how the STEM knowledge and skills the students are building will open doors to local career opportunities.

"One objective of Let's Talk Science is to show students how STEM is relevant to their lives, and then inspire, support and facilitate that learning. A way to do that is to bring in local people who are excited about their work and goals, and make the connections with kids."

- Marcie Fofonoff, Community Liaison, Let's Talk Science

With five million Kindergarten to Grade 12 youth in Canada, it's critical to find ways to reach them all and truly unlock the potential offered through STEM-based learning. Let's Talk Science works to engage students in all parts of Canada, including remote, northern and Indigenous communities so they all have the opportunity to build skills needed for their future.



Summer Institutes

For the third straight year, Let's Talk Science conducted Summer Institutes with Early Years to Grade 3 educators to explore effective learning strategies with the support of IdeaPark resources. This year, the Summer Institutes focused on using problem solving and inquiry as a context for developing mathematical thinking and numeracy skills.

In total, 12 workshops were held in Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador, reaching a total of 284 educators.

"Such a great experience and valuable resource! I am walking away with so much more than a day of experiences. I have a database of resources that I will undoubtedly use for the rest of my career.

Thank you!"

- Stephanie Gauthier, Delta West Academy, Calgary, AB, Grade 2



Impact on Educators

Teachers Experiment with Inquiry-Based Learning

Since Spring 2016, Let's Talk Science has been working with Prairie River Junior High School in High Prairie, Alberta. That work includes hands-on classroom activities for the students and ongoing professional development for local educators made possible with support from Shell Canada.

Teachers learned how CurioCity and Tomatosphere™ could help them integrate inquiry-based learning strategies into their lesson plans. Participating educators increased their own enthusiasm for teaching science and its applications.



By offering professional learning opportunities, Let's Talk Science helps educators build their own capacity to support student learning.

Supporter Listing

Let's Talk Science gratefully acknowledges gifts received between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2017

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Thank you to 3M Canada for their contribution of supplies for the Let's Talk Science Challenge design challenges.

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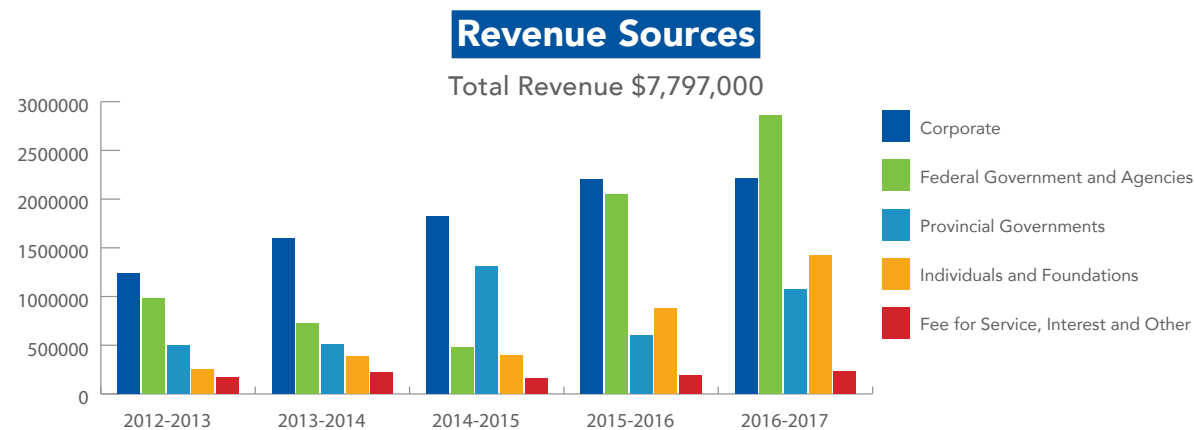
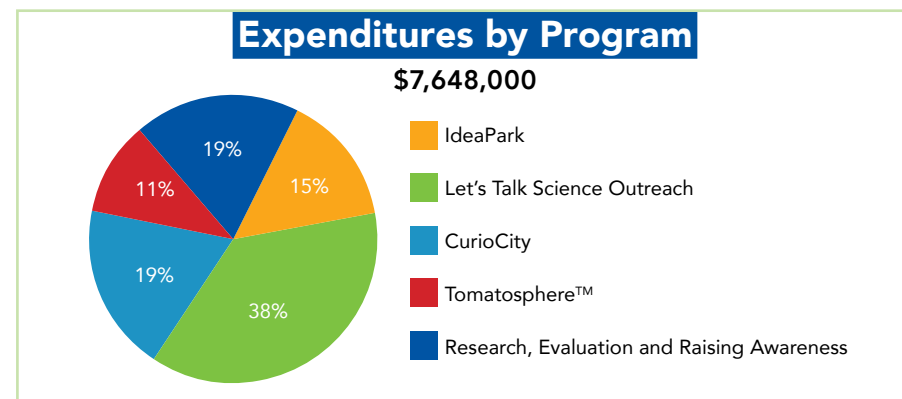
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Let's Talk Science Statement of Financial Position

Year ending August 31, 2017 with comparative figures for 2016

REVENUE	2017	2016
Corporations	2,214,000	2,200,000
Federal Government and Agencies	2,862,000	2,048,000
Provincial Governments	1,075,000	598,000
Individuals and Foundations	1,418,000	881,000
Fees and Other	228,000	187,000
	7,797,000	5,914,000
EXPENDITURES		
Program Wages and Benefits	3,720,000	2,830,000
Program Delivery and Development	2,648,000	1,656,000
Marketing and Communications	360,000	346,000
Training, Development and Conferences	282,000	279,000
Information Systems and Technology	148,000	177,000
General and Administrative	490,000	535,000
	7,648,000	5,823,000
Increase in Resources	149,000	91,000



Partner Highlight – Amgen Canada

The collaboration between Let's Talk Science and Amgen Canada is a stellar example of how charities and industry can work together to envision the future and apply real-world insights in a practical and pragmatic way. Using an evidence-based approach, we have worked together for nearly a decade to improve STEM learning, showcasing how critical it is to prepare Canadian youth in new ways for a rapidly changing world.

Our landmark Spotlight on Science Learning reports have documented the state of science learning in Canada. Our work has been used by many organizations and policy makers, and covered extensively by media (well over 400 stories). Since our collaboration began, public awareness and support for STEM learning has sky-rocketed. We have brought together decision makers, thought leaders, industry partners, researchers, educators, parents and youth to explore and design new learning opportunities.

And we've had a lot of fun along the way! With the participation of influential Canadians like Brett Wilson,

Alyson Schafer, George Kourounis and others, we've brought science to life, engaged youth and showcased the diversity of opportunities available to people with STEM-based skills.

Our partnership laid the foundation for Canada 2067, an innovative and ambitious initiative to forge a national vision for STEM learning. This is no easy feat given that Canada has NO national ministry of education (in fact more than 20 separate provincial/territorial ministries govern education from Kindergarten to post-secondary). Canada 2067 is surpassing all expectations – galvanizing positive, future-oriented effort that underscores the need for immediate action.

Through our partnership we have raised awareness, sparked conversations and effected change. Together, Let's Talk Science and Amgen Canada are truly impacting Canada's next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, discoverers and citizens.



Photo by: Maxime Boudreau

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