



Annual Report 2020-2021

# Breaking Down Barriers

let's talk   
science

# Message from the President and Board Chair

This year was one of considerable introspection and action at Let's Talk Science. We rallied to support youth, educators, volunteers and families with innovative new programming that responded to their changing needs throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. We established new ways of working to ensure our staff and volunteer teams were safe and effective. We nurtured existing partnerships and we established new collaborations. And we worked even harder to tackle systemic barriers, supporting inclusion and a sense of belonging in STEM. We believe that the world needs STEM to conquer current and looming global challenges and STEM needs diverse voices and perspectives to find the best solutions.

This annual report shares our work from a lens of how we delivered on the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. From the governance perspective, we welcomed three new board members, Deborah Saucier, Debasis Bhaumik and Eric Bosco. Our Anti-Racism Task Force completed its work and informed the development of our inaugural Equity Plan. We also joined the federal government's 50:30 program and the Luminary project led by Indigenous Works. This work builds on Let's Talk Science's long-standing commitment to preparing all youth to participate in a rapidly changing world.

Let's Talk Science programming delivered strong results despite pandemic conditions. Engagement with our professional learning programs doubled as we supported educators who faced new challenges teaching online. Our Horizon project provided 73,500 packages of innovative learning resources to children served by over 300 community partners, including 110 food banks across Canada. The success of that project led to STEM Club, which provided supplies for under-resourced schools and community partners that serve youth typically marginalized from STEM. We increased our focus on infusing Indigenous ways of knowing across our programming, and building internal capacity to recognize and address unconscious bias. We also created exciting new, inclusive programming to support climate education and action. As our post-secondary volunteers struggled with their own learning situations, they remained engaged in outreach and many new STEM professionals joined to share their passion and expertise with youth.

It was a year of continuous learning and innovation that demonstrated Let's Talk Science is committed to action. We lean into difficult discussions and we develop meaningful solutions with our stakeholders and partners. We are indebted to our board of directors, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters for their ongoing commitment to our mission. Without them, our work would not be possible. Together, we share the common purpose of helping all youth in Canada prepare to participate in a rapidly changing world.

**Hilary Foulkes, P.Geo**  
Board Chair

**Dr. Bonnie Schmidt, CM, PhD, FRSC**  
President & Founder

## Board of Directors 2020-2021

**Hilary Foulkes**, Chair  
**Linda Thomas**, Vice Chair  
**Michele Noble**, Secretary  
**Warren Granger**, Treasurer  
**Dr. Bruce Archibald**, Director  
**Debasis Bhaumik**, Director  
**Eric Bosco**, Director  
**Dr. Randy Frank**, Director  
**Jonathan Kochis**, Director  
**Dr. Deborah Saucier**, Director  
Leann Sweeney, Director  
Janice Williams, Director

# Let's Talk Science Engagement 2020-2021

Operating for a full year during the Covid-19 pandemic, we innovated and transitioned to continue enhancing and supporting online learning. Our teams developed many online and offline initiatives for children, youth, educators and families across Canada.



**2 million+**  
interactions  
with youth  
and educators



Programming used in  
**6,000+**  
**schools** in  
**1,700+**  
**communities**  
in every province  
and territory



**699,000+**  
**people**  
accessed  
digital learning  
resources



**52**  
**Outreach**  
**sites**  
across Canada



Approximately  
**10,000**  
**classrooms**  
(over **186,000**  
**students**)  
participated in  
national projects



**1.2+ million**  
online sessions with  
approximately  
**2.3 million**  
page views in  
Canada

# Supporting More Educators through the Covid-19 Crisis

For Let's Talk Science to succeed in inspiring all children and youth in Canada through creativity and innovation in STEM education, our relationship with educators is key. This year demonstrated the strength of that relationship and our shared commitment to supporting youth throughout the disruption caused by Covid-19.

For instance, our Teacher Leader program helped educators share their expertise and our programming within their local community of educators. The evidence shows that a peer-to-peer professional network supports sustained impact. And by using this teacher-centred approach, we allowed educators to lead us and inform our work. In doing so, Let's Talk Science responded to the needs of educators and their communities, providing them with the most relevant programming and setting them up for success with students.

As Bryan Ouellette, a Teacher Leader from New Brunswick explains: "A program that unites like-minded educators to promote innovation in education as well as inspire both adults and youth, is a cornerstone in the future of transforming education as we know it."

We furthered the Teacher Leader community by co-developing learning resources with educators from Indigenous schools in Northern Saskatchewan. This project incorporated Indigenous perspectives into Let's Talk Science initiatives through the engagement of Indigenous educators and advisors. The goal is to provide meaningful STEM-learning experiences that are respectful, accessible and inclusive for Indigenous learners and their communities.

Another new project that became a core offering in 2021 was the series Coffee and a Keynote. These virtual presentations streamed live on Saturdays and were recorded, allowing for increased accessibility for participants. One session, presented by Dr. Rumeet Billan, focused on building student resilience through STEM learning. Another, featuring Dr. Jia Hu, gave educators the information they need to speak with students about Covid-19 and vaccines.

"I enjoy hearing from different individuals who are from different disciplines, but who can make those solid connections among teaching, learning competencies and STEM! I have loved this March's Coffee and a Keynote Series. Diversity at its finest! Energizing! Exciting! Thought-provoking! Thank you!"

*Educator, St. John's, NL.*





While the pandemic continued to change the learning landscape, Let's Talk Science adapted and provided teachers with resources that allowed them to have an immediate positive impact on their students. With LIVE STEM, Let's Talk Science presented a series of live broadcasts to classrooms across Canada. During these co-learning broadcasts, a facilitator led educators and their students through engaging, interactive activities designed to introduce STEM concepts and skills and model effective teaching practices.



**11,781**  
professional  
learning educator  
interactions



**34,706**  
**youth**  
participated in  
co-learning  
broadcasts with  
educators



**300**  
professional  
learning sessions  
delivered at no  
financial cost to  
educators

## Two partnerships provided more opportunities for innovation, equity and collaboration.



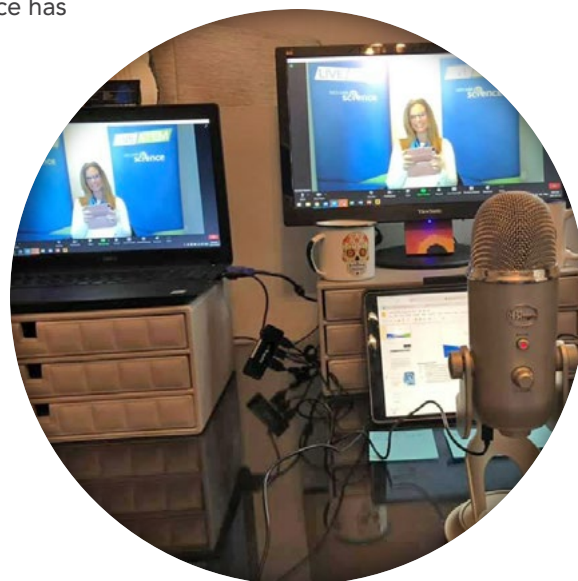
1 As a featured community partner in the Flipgrid Discovery Library, Let's Talk Science supported teachers to capture student voices within their classrooms and use alternative forms of assessment with ready-to-use STEM-learning packages. These resources were used over 400 times by educators in their classrooms and generated 123 hours of video responses by students. Topics ranged from Drawing Your Future STEM Career, to Design-Build Challenges on Social Distancing and Marshmallow Towers.

2 Scholar's Choice hosted five Let's Talk Science webinars to build digital literacy, each of which was attended by more than 1,200 Early Years educators who work in child care centres and Kindergarten settings. These sessions helped educators with strategies to develop coding and computational thinking skills with the children in their care.



In addition to these partnerships, Let's Talk Science delivered virtual sessions to pre-service teachers at a number of institutions, including the University of Ottawa, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Laurier University and Lakehead University. With the goal of helping the candidates' professional development, the sessions were well-received. In fact, Let's Talk Science has been invited back by all of the institutions to lead more sessions.

All of these varied initiatives led to an increase in engagement with teachers this year and online growth with our educator audience. The fact that we are reaching more individual educators across Canada is especially encouraging given the constraints during the pandemic. With the ongoing development of new programming, we are committed to collaboration and the continued growth of educator engagement. All of this is made possible through the generous support of our Visionary donors, Amgen Canada Inc., the Government of Canada, Hibernia Management and Development Company Ltd, Mitchell A. Baran, and the Trottier Family Foundation. Together, we help children and youth develop the competencies they'll need to contribute to a changing world.



# Pivoting to Reach More Canadian Youth

With the continuing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic front and centre, the Let's Talk Science Outreach team had to completely pivot and change their method of delivery for STEM outreach during the 2020-2021 school year. The evolution from fully in-person volunteer-led programming to virtual delivery was challenging, but we successfully reached youth in numbers that were comparable to our pre-pandemic scope. Let's Talk Science Outreach volunteers used a variety of approaches to reach youth of all ages, motivating and inspiring them to explore STEM in everyday life and build critical STEM skills required to thrive in an ever-changing world.



inspired children and youth in Canada to explore STEM and build their STEM skills. With the provision of materials and an emphasis on diverse role models and mentors, Let's Talk Science strives to offer accessible programs, services and resources that are inclusive, address systemic barriers, and lead to equitable outcomes for our audiences.

The success of the new suite of virtual programming, with its added accessibility, means online engagement will be an important part of Let's Talk Science's future. Let's Talk Science Outreach volunteers play an important role in providing access to STEM learning, and they are vital as positive role models to the youth they encounter. With the ongoing commitment of our Catalyst donors, Bayer Inc., NOVA Chemicals, and the RBC Foundation, Let's Talk Science remains dedicated to strengthening and enriching the volunteer experience by providing resources, opportunities, training and support.

Innovative volunteers and a creative staff team led to the development of a new slate of nationally-coordinated virtual activities that engaged children and youth across Canada – from Early Years to high school.

## STEM Storytime

With its focus on children in Early Years to Grade 3, this weekly activity featured Let's Talk Science volunteers across the country reading a story and leading simple hands-on STEM activities related to the story.

**"Thank you for showing female scientists and diverse ethnicities represented on screen. This was a great way to make science engaging while still distancing in the classroom."**

*- Educator who participated in STEM Storytime*



## STEM Club

Each week, Grades 4-6 students joined a staff host and Outreach volunteers in a webinar to do a fun hands-on STEM activity and explore related career pathways. The program, offered in both English and French, introduced students to diverse role models and gave them the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of various STEM experts.

Of the 1,065 classrooms that participated in STEM Club this year about half identified as lower socio-economic schools. Materials for each activity were shipped to these schools across Canada at no cost.

**"My students LOVED STEM Club and have been so excited to do this! Especially in a time of such huge separation, it was amazing to engage with others from across Canada in these fun challenges!"**

*- Educator who participated in STEM Club*



## Let's Talk Science Challenge Online

Each week from February to May, kids in Grades 6-8 participated in a live interactive quiz show based on chapters from the Let's Talk Science Challenge handbook. Youth also recorded and posted video responses to the weekly engineering design challenge. Plus, the finale featured a supercharged quiz show, a community-judged engineering challenge and special guests. Overall, this initiative emphasized team collaboration, cooperative learning and problem-solving skills.

## Curious Careers

This series for Grades 6-8 students offered monthly STEM career exploration events. Each session focused on a different theme, including technology, healthcare and climate, to explore diverse STEM fields and show students what future STEM careers might look like. The series included panel discussions where post-secondary students and industry professionals discussed their experiences working and studying in STEM. Its aim was to help students reflect on their skills and interests and begin to contemplate their own future.

**"It was an amazing experience to talk to professionals in the field and ask questions! I greatly enjoyed learning about stem cells and was able to relay what I learned to my friends and family afterwards."**

*- Student who participated in StemCellTalks.*



## National Symposium Series

Geared towards high school students in Grades 10-12, these events presented youth with an in-depth STEM topic meant to inspire, fuel critical thinking and prepare them to meet the needs of tomorrow. Each symposium featured guest speakers from the STEM community discussing topics, including genomics, artificial intelligence, stem cell research, the environment, and much more. In addition, there were interactive portions during the series with quizzes, polls and Q&A sessions. The symposiums provided a unique opportunity for youth to engage with STEM leaders. Partners in the programming included Genome Canada, the Royal Society of Canada, Genome Québec and Kids Code Jeunesse.

In spite of the year's challenges, Let's Talk Science Outreach volunteers successfully pivoted to the virtual delivery of programs. In the process, they motivated and





## Virtual Outreach Engagement



More than  
**416,000**  
 interactions with  
 children and youth  
 (including more than **73,500**  
 youth interactions through  
 the Horizon Project)



More than  
**49,000**  
 Indigenous  
 youth  
 interactions



Engaged  
 children and youth  
 from over  
**680**  
 communities  
 from coast to  
 coast



Achieved over  
**21,000**  
 interactions with  
 parents/general  
 public



Delivered over  
**4,100**  
 hands-on/minds-on  
 experiences



Worked in  
 partnership with  
 more than  
**3,100**  
**educators**

## Let's Talk Science Outreach Site Partners

### 25 Years +

Western University  
Queen's University  
University of Ottawa  
Simon Fraser University  
University of Victoria  
Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's campus  
The University of British Columbia

### Over 20 Years

McMaster University  
University of Guelph  
University of Toronto, St. George campus  
McGill University  
University of Alberta  
University of Winnipeg  
Dalhousie University  
University of Manitoba  
Carleton University  
University of Calgary

### Over 15 Years

University of Toronto, Mississauga campus  
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton campus  
University of Saskatchewan  
University of Toronto, Scarborough campus  
Cambrian College  
Laurentian University

### Over 10 Years

Université du Québec à Montréal  
University of Waterloo  
Fleming College  
Confederation College  
University of Prince Edward Island  
Cape Breton University  
University of New Brunswick, Saint John campus  
University of Lethbridge  
Université de Sherbrooke  
Concordia University  
Ontario Tech University  
Fanshawe College

### 6-10 Years

Memorial University of Newfoundland, Grenfell campus  
Mount Allison University  
University of Windsor  
Loyalist College  
Ryerson University  
Université de Moncton, campus de Moncton  
Université de Moncton, campus d'Edmundston  
Brock University

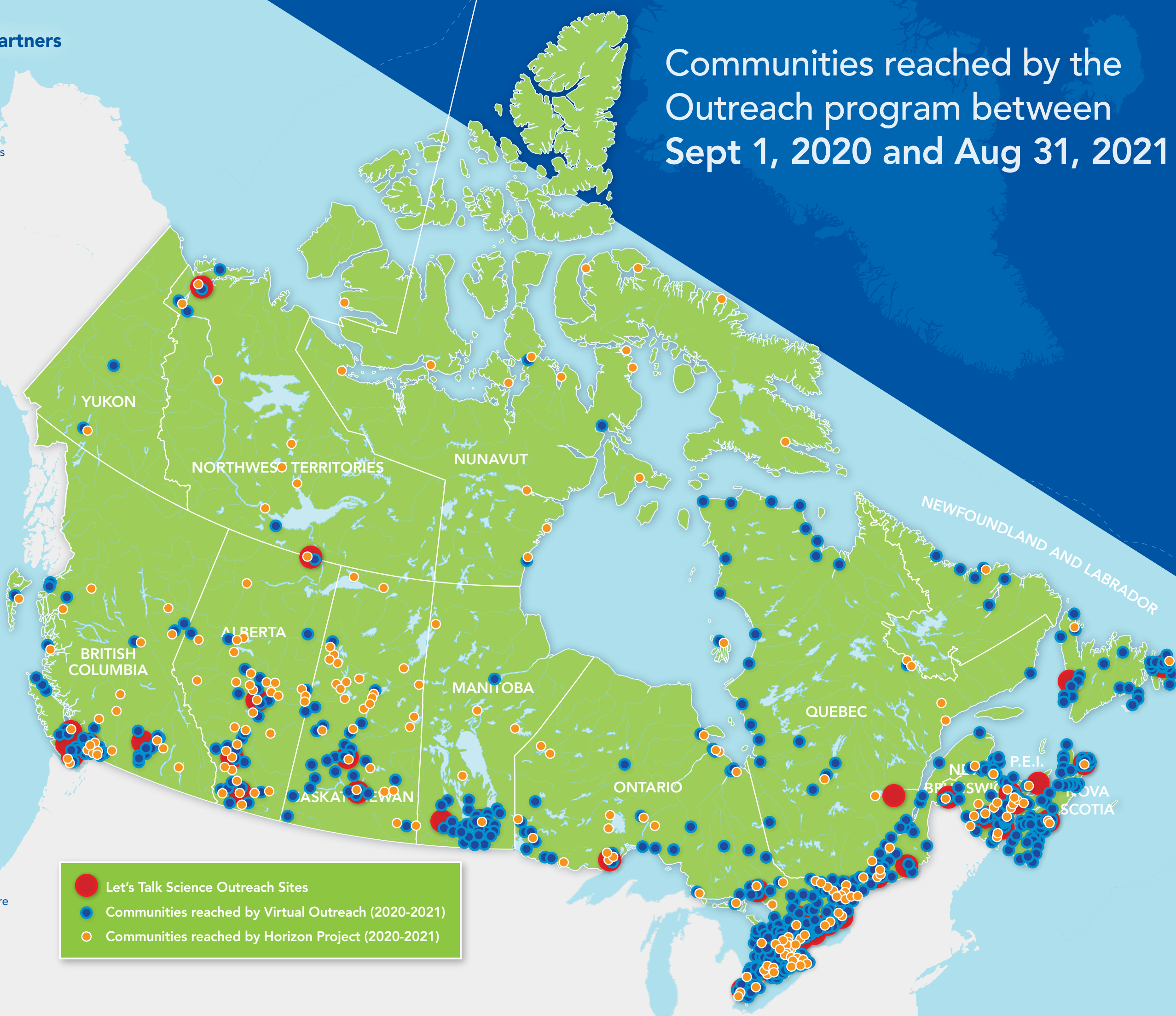
### 1-5 Years

Brandon University  
Lakehead University, Orillia campus  
Lakehead University, Thunder Bay campus  
University of the Fraser Valley  
The University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus  
First Nations University of Canada  
Aurora Research Institute, Western Arctic Research Centre  
Université du Québec à Chicoutimi  
Aurora Research Institute, South Slave Research Centre

### New 2020-2021

Vancouver Island University

# Communities reached by the Outreach program between Sept 1, 2020 and Aug 31, 2021



# Empowering the Team

The challenges of the pandemic were mitigated somewhat for the Let's Talk Science team thanks to everyone's commitment to the organization's core values, one of which is 'collaborative spirit'. We are better, smarter and more creative when we work together in diverse teams to achieve meaningful outcomes.

When the pandemic was declared, our response started by turning inward and empowering our team. We continued to offer a flexible and safe work environment that focused on learning and we looked at every experience as an opportunity to improve our efforts to build futures. Staff worked collaboratively to shape all aspects of our response.

Our staff engagement surveys indicated that staff and volunteers felt seen and heard, and they enjoyed working for a purpose-driven organization that strives to make our world better. Their opinions and feedback emphasized their commitment to Let's Talk Science and our initiatives.

Empowering the team continued with the development of our inaugural Equity Plan, which was informed by the work of an Anti-Racism Task Force that met from July 2020 to February 2021. The Task Force included staff, volunteers and board representation; their report identified a strong organizational commitment to equity and made recommendations for further improvements.

**"The opportunity to be part of this task force was both an extremely uplifting experience, but also challenging at times. It is great to be part of an organization that wants to rise to the challenge and make the necessary change that is needed to become a truly equitable space for all those engaging with Let's Talk Science in any capacity."**

*Rosanna Mascarenhas, Co-Chair, Anti-Racism Task Force and Let's Talk Science staff member*



Their top recommendation was to establish a senior position of Director, Equity (this new role was filled in October 2021). Throughout the year, we also provided several anti-racism training and development opportunities for staff, volunteers, and the board. The world needs STEM, and STEM needs diverse voices and perspectives. We are determined to maintain our long-standing commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility and continue leading by example. In order to do so, we rely on partners such as our Innovator donors to invest in the work that we do. These include Dr. David Colcleugh, Richard & Leigh Dobson, Seaspan Marine Corporate, Toyota Canada Foundation, and Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Inc.





## Employee Engagement



Employees  
based in  
**7 provinces**



**92%**  
**employees**  
say Let's Talk  
Science is a great  
place to work



**81%**  
**employees**  
aware of our  
equity  
commitment

Committed to collaboration, we encourage our team to contribute to the wider community. Contributions made by Let's Talk Science leaders:

**1 Bonnie Schmidt, President and Founder**

- Genome Canada Board of Directors
- Federal Government Public Awareness of Artificial Intelligence Working Group
- Committees of the Canadian Science Policy Centre, the Royal Society of Canada and the Inter-American Network of Academies of Sciences
- Mentor, STEM Nepal

**2 David Lapides, VP Programs**

- Smithsonian Science Education Center
- Super Dual Auroral Radar Network (SuperDARN Canada) Advisory Committee
- C21 Canada Community Advisory Panel

**3 Vanessa Nelson, VP External Relations**

- Read On Canada! steering committee

**4 Cailin Clarke, VP Operations**

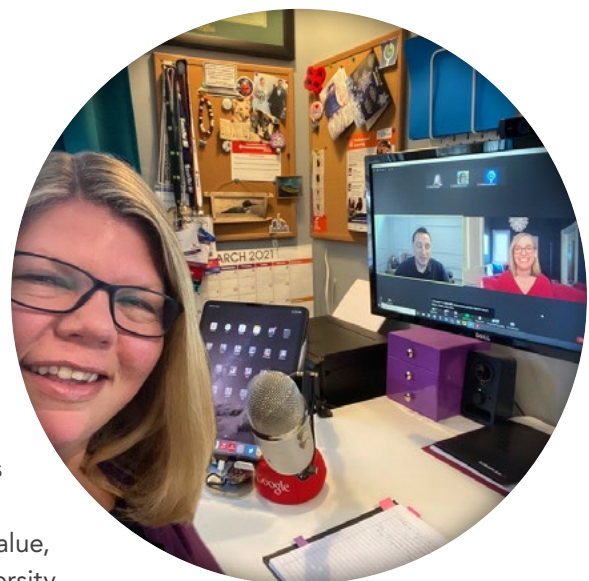
- Community of Practice, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

**5 Isabel Deslauriers, Director, Youth and Volunteer Experience**

- Science and Technology Awareness Network board of directors

**6 Joanna Sanders, Director, Professional Learning**

- FlipGrid Advisory Board for Accessibility + Inclusive Design.

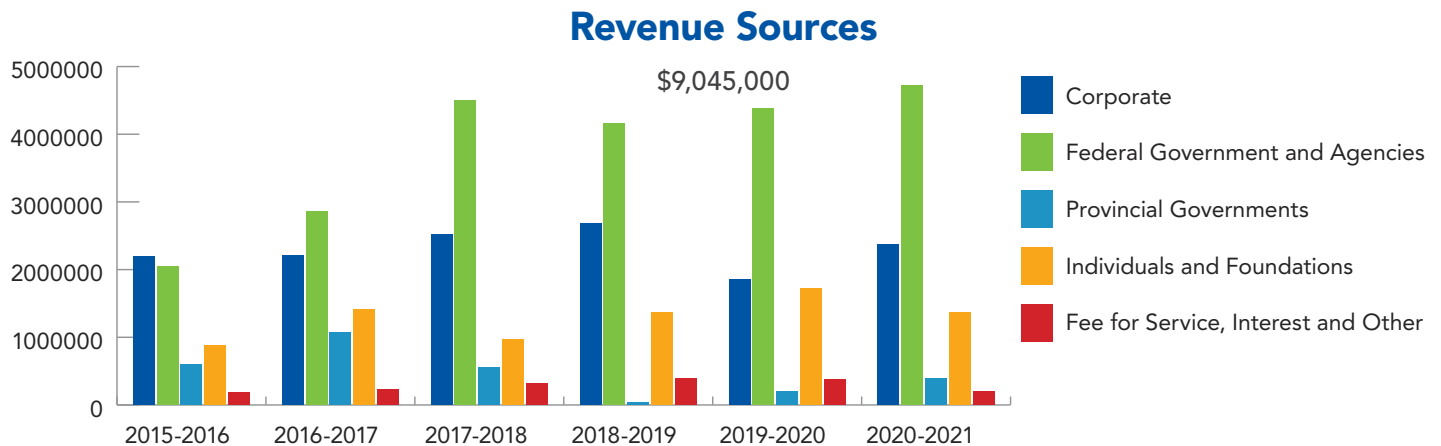
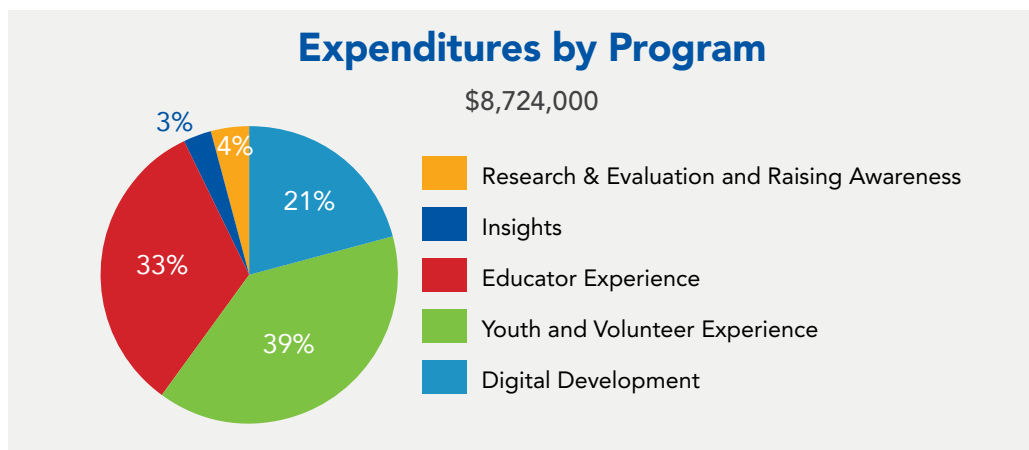


Giving back to the community and empowering our team underscores our deep commitment to action. When we maintain a collaborative spirit, we contribute to meaningful change. Commitment to another value, continuous learning, will help us examine our own biases, improve diversity and build inclusion through accessible programming and organizational activities that address systematic barriers and lead to equitable outcomes for our team, the people we serve and our communities.

# Statement of Financial Position





Year ending August 31, 2021 with comparative figures for 2020

REVENUE	2021	2020
Corporations	2,376,000	1,853,000
Federal Government and Agencies	4,719,000	4,378,000
Provincial Governments	389,000	199,000
Individuals and Foundations	1,362,000	1,727,000
Interest and Other Income	199,000	376,000
	<b>\$9,045,000</b>	<b>\$8,533,000</b>
EXPENDITURES		
Program Wages and Benefits	5,871,000	5,137,000
Program Delivery and Development	1,148,000	1,760,000
Marketing and Communications	530,000	424,000
Training, Development and Conferences	162,000	173,000
Information Systems and Technology	446,000	386,000
General and Administrative	567,000	520,000
	<b>\$8,724,000</b>	<b>\$8,400,000</b>
Increase in Resources	321,000	133,000



# Supporter Listing

Let's Talk Science gratefully acknowledges gifts received between September 1, 2020 and August 31, 2021

-  10 years or more of support
-  5 years or more of support
-  in-kind support
-  new supporter

## Visionaries

Thank you to these Visionary donors for making a significant impact through current commitments of at least \$1,000,000.



## Catalysts

(\$500,000 - \$999,999)



## Innovators

(\$250,000 - \$499,999)



Mobility Partner

## Champions

(\$100,000 - \$249,999)



Thank you for the in-kind support for Tomatosphere™ from: HeinzSeed, Stokes Seeds, the University of Guelph and the Canadian Space Agency.

Thank you to all donors who gave anonymously.

## Discoverers (\$50,000 - \$99,999)



## Explorers (\$25,000 - \$49,999)



## Builders (\$10,000 - \$24,999)



## Pioneers (\$1,000 - \$9,999)

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Automotive Recyclers of Canada                        | Enterprise Holdings   | The Smart & Caring Fund at the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation | You Be The Chemist Canada                   |
| BC Hydro  | G. Murray & Edna Forbes Foundation at the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation | Stantec  | The Annan Family                            |
| The Benefaction Foundation                            | Gilead Alberta ULC  | Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre                                      | Cailin Clarke & John Greig                  |
| Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine | Helena Anyadike Memorial Fund at The Winnipeg Foundation                          | TransAlta Corporation  | Warren & Joanne Granger                     |
| Chemistry Industry Association of Canada              | Kiewit Engineering  | The University of Alberta  | Justin Matthew Robert Kole                  |
| CIBC Children's Foundation (Miracle Day)              | L'Oreal Canada Inc.   | Western University   | David Lapidés & Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés |
| Citrix  | Mount Sinai Hospital  | Winnipeg Airports Authority  | Vanessa Nelson                              |
| Crosslinx Transit Solutions - Constructors            | Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine                                       | Best Buy Canada Ltd  | Michele Noble                               |
| Enbridge Gas Inc. - London & District                 | RBC Royal Bank  | The HeinzSeed Company  | Will Rogers & Helen Ferkul                  |
|   | SickKids Research Institute   | Scholar's Choice   | Bonnie Schmidt                              |
|   |   | University of Guelph Department of Plant Agriculture                   | Sam Z. Solecki                              |
|   |   |  | Linda Thomas                                |
|   |   |  | Craig & Cheryl White                        |



## Friends

AbbVie Corporation ✪  
 Altus Assessments ✪  
 Brescia University College ✪  
 CLEARGOALS Company ✪  
 Dispersa ✪  
 London Community Foundation  
 Norgen Biotek ✪  
 Promethean World Ltd ✪  
 RCCG The King's Covenant ✪  
 Sheffield Professional Planning ✪  
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 Wendy Evans ✪  
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 Suzette Faria ✪  
 Ima Fisher ✪  
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 Emma Stephen ✪  
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 Kathleen Tilly-Ellis ✪  
 Carolyn Tomkins ✪  
 & Aly MacDonald  
 Mattea & Joseph Turnbull ✪  
 Murray Twist ✪  
 Rod Utting ✪  
 Lynn Van Roestel ✪  
 Sabina Visan ✪  
 Peeranut Visetsuth ✪  
 Kenny Vo ✪  
 Thomas Walsh ✪  
 Mary Watson ✪  
 Craig Wells ✪  
 Suzanne Welsh ✪  
 Heather Williams ✪  
 Kathryn Wilson ✪  
 Nicole Winter  
 Ian Yates ✪  
 Peter Zhou ✪

# Partner Highlight

## Rio Tinto

Let's Talk Science's ability to deliver meaningful programming that fosters the creative, critical thinking leaders of tomorrow would not be possible without the generous support of donors like Rio Tinto. A supporter since 2017, Rio Tinto's investments have enabled us to expand our Outreach and Indigenous programming in Quebec.

Starting in 2017, Rio Tinto provided funding to support increased outreach in northern Quebec through the establishment of a new Outreach site at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC). The funding also allowed us to work closely with the Innu community of Mashteuiatsh in the Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean region - expanding our relationships and deepening access to STEM learning for children, youth and educators.



Thanks to Rio Tinto's ongoing support, we can develop new, meaningful programs and materials that will benefit youth, as well as educators, across Canada.

"STEM knowledge is not only at the heart of our industry, but the key to tackling today's global challenges such as climate change. Let's Talk Science's free bilingual programmes ensures that all Canadian children, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to hands-on STEM education. Curiosity is one of Rio Tinto's core values and we are proud to partner with Let's Talk Science to help develop the next generation of innovative, critical thinkers."

*Ivan Vella, Rio Tinto Aluminium Chief Executive*



The strength of these community relationships was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic when Rio Tinto brought our Horizon STEM activity kits to more than 250 children in Mashteuiatsh throughout the summer and fall of 2021.

Today, Rio Tinto significantly increased its investment with a recent commitment to a four-year donation totalling one million dollars. Recognizing the value and impact of our programming, this continued commitment has expanded to include support for Outreach across Canada, allowing us to grow our relationships in communities from coast to coast to coast. Let's Talk Science's programming also encourages youth to consider future careers across a wide-range of industries, including the metals and mining sectors.

In addition to their financial generosity, Rio Tinto employees have been actively engaged in our programming. Through various engagement opportunities from content review to career panels, participation in our volunteer awards judging and being "guest" participants in our online virtual programming, Rio Tinto employees have been generous with their time sharing their experience and expertise.

Our partnership has demonstrated that by working together we can inspire youth to thrive and reach their full potential in a world of accelerating change.





Let's Talk Science  
1-877-474-4081

Charitable registration number:  
88540 0846 RR001

let's talk   
science

parlons   
sciences

 @LetsTalkScience

 @LetsTalkScience

 LetsTalkScience

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 Let's Talk Science