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Fired Up About Science!

Ottawa ON: Over 225,000 Canadian youth in over 450 communities nationwide are going back to school fired up about science! That's because they've experienced hands-on programming by one or more of Actua's 29 college and university based member organizations delivering science, engineering and technology workshops, summer day camps, clubs or other community outreach initiatives for youth. Actua is Canada's largest science, engineering and technology youth outreach network with 20 years of experience inspiring young people to discover their potential!



Actua is the only national organization of its kind, with science, engineering and technology programming designed specifically to engage all youth audiences in every province and territory across Canada, regardless of background, ability or socio-economic status. There are many stakeholders with a shared interest in building science literacy, and many who support Actua and its work. GE Canada is Actua's Cornerstone Partner. "GE Canada's partnership with Actua supports Canada's increasing need for more science and technology skills. By engaging youth in fun and interactive programs, Actua is building the science literacy of a future generation of innovators. This is a great investment in our future," says Elyse Allan, President and CEO of GE Canada.

"Our goal is to build confidence and interest among youth in the areas of science and technology whether or not they actually go on to study science. By engaging youth in experiences that demonstrate how science is exciting, fun and related to everyday life, they start to see the potential role that science can play in their lives," explains Jennifer Flanagan, President and CEO of Actua.

Actua's programs are delivered largely by undergraduate students in science, engineering and technology fields. "These students are highly energetic and are passionate about their field of study. They make excellent role models for the youth they reach", explains Flanagan. From coast to coast this summer, young Canadians discovered their inner engineer by building miniature robots, trebuchets, gliders, hydro turbines and solar powered cars. They experienced what it is like to be a health science researcher by extracting and analyzing DNA, making "thinking caps", a map of their brain that they wear on their heads and constructing model digestive tracts. They learned about the science of global warming and the impact of climate change by making biospheres and building model coastlines.

Mentoring is another key success factor in Actua's programs. Each year Actua connects over 200 young scientists in any number of fields ranging from aeronautical engineering to zoology. April Khademi, a third year PhD Candidate in Electrical Engineering at the University of Toronto gave members of a girls club a presentation on her research in medical image processing. The girls got to see and identify medical images of various body parts and even measure image features such as tumours. "I am proud to be a mentor, because I am sure of the positive impact it will have. I know that when I was young, these programs weren't around and if my father and brothers weren't engineers, I probably wouldn't have pursued this career," commented Ms. Khademi.



Another key success factor is that Actua takes its programming to where youth are! "Our members pride themselves in their capacity to take their programming on the road, reaching communities that have little or no extra-curricular programming for youth. Each summer they partner with community organizations hours away from their home campus," explains Flanagan. "We also have a strong presence in the North, reaching many rural and remote fly-in communities throughout Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory."

Actua is Canada's leading science, engineering and technology youth outreach network. Nearly 3 million young Canadians have been inspired through their participation in Actua's positive, hands-on educational workshops, camps and community outreach initiatives. Each year, Actua's growing network of member organizations reach over 225,000 young Canadians in over 450 communities nationwide. Actua's major funders include: GE Canada, Synapse – CIHR Youth Connection, Suncor Energy Foundation, NSERC and Shell Canada. For more information about Actua visit www.actua.ca.

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Contact Information:

Leslie Cuthbertson, Director of Partnerships and Communications, Actua
15 York Street, Ottawa ON K1N 5S7
Tel: (613) 234 4137 Fax: 613 234 4779
E-Mail: leslie.cuthbertson@actua.ca
Web: www.actua.ca