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PRESS RELEASE

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Code on the Hill – A Science Odyssey Event with the Minister of Science

OTTAWA - Tuesday, May 10, 2016 - The Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science, has partnered with Ladies Learning Code, Actua, the University of Ottawa Faculty of Engineering and Google to present *Code on the Hill*, a day designed to help celebrate Science Odyssey week and to ignite young Canadians' curiosity about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and coding.

Code on the Hill showcases the critical need for youth to develop digital skills needed for the 21st century jobs and inspire them to become the creators of tomorrow's digital technology. The event features the *uOttawa Maker Mobile*, supported by Actua, and the Ladies Learning Code *code:mobile* which were unloaded on Parliament Hill to deliver exciting hands-on coding activities to a group of grade four students from a local public school. The Minister of Science, the Honourable Kirsty Duncan, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Terry Beech, participated in the days' innovative coding activities.

"These types of hands-on experiences with technology transform the way youth engage with computer science and lay the foundation for future pathways to discovery and innovation," said Minister Duncan. "Organizations like Actua and Ladies Learning Code are helping to teach Canadians, in particular young women, the necessary skills to succeed and become passionate builders of technology."

"Learning to code is a new essential literacy for our youth to prepare for tomorrow's digital economy and will be essential regardless of which career path youth choose to pursue", said Jennifer Flanagan, CEO of Actua. "We are very grateful for the support of Minister Duncan to bring federal profile to this critical youth engagement initiative," Flanagan added.

"We need more moments like Code on the Hill that will inspire Canada's next generation of technology builders." Said Sam Sebastian, Managing Director of Google Canada. "Ninety-eight percent of Google engineers had some level of exposure to computer science and technology before entering university. Events like today will help Canadian children understand that computer science is not simply the language of ones and zeros. It's the language of creativity, entrepreneurship and Canada's future potential."

Code on the Hill is delivered as part of Science Odyssey (formerly National Science and Technology Week), a collaborative event led by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), federal departments, agencies and community organizations.

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About Actua

Actua is Canada's leading science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach network representing 33 university and college based members. Over 3 million young Canadians have been inspired through their participation in Actua's hands on educational workshops, camps and community outreach initiatives. Each year, Actua's growing network of member organizations reach over 250,000 young Canadians in over 500 communities nationwide. At the national level Actua focuses on the engagement of underrepresented audiences through specialized programs for Indigenous youth, girls and young women, at-risk youth and youth living in Northern and remote communities. Actua's major funders include: Google Canada, Suncor Energy Foundation, GE Canada and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. For more information about Actua, visit actua.ca.

About uOttawa Maker Mobile

The uOttawa Maker Mobile is a Makerspace on wheels; traveling from location to location on a full-time basis, it carries equipment such as 3D printers and scanners, laser cutters, and Arduino microcontrollers. Using the latest technologies, the Maker Mobile delivers fun hands-on learning activities to schools, libraries and community centres across the region, complementing the school curriculum. Our goal is to encourage creativity, problem-solving skills and interest in technology among everyone in the community. Through our workshops, we aim to reach at least 1000 kids in the National Capital Region from September 2015 to June 2016.