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MEDIA RELEASE

Actua Receives Funding to Launch Cyber-Empowerment Initiative for Girls and Young Women

Ottawa, August 27, 2019/ Today, Karen McCrimmon, Parliamentary Secretary for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, announced that Actua will be receiving \$600,000 from the federal government for a pilot cyber-empowerment initiative for girls and young women.

The three-year pilot project, entitled *Engage. Empower. Connect: cyber-empowerment for girls and young women*, will support Actua's work to provide girls with digital skills that help prevent online victimization. The project, funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada, will be focused on delivering asset-based STEM programming and the creation of positive online connections.

"Actua is committed to building positive digital citizenship in youth, leading to a new cyber-smart generation ready to embrace the challenges of the digital age," said Jennifer Flanagan, President and CEO of Actua. "We are incredibly grateful for this funding which will equip thousands of girls with a critical understanding of online technology, in particular the role of AI, and encourage proactive and self-driven online identity formation."

The project will integrate AI lessons to support youth in thinking critically about how they interact with AI, how they might contribute to the evolution of AI in society (as future producers or legislators) and how they may ultimately leverage AI to solve global challenges.

"Investing in national networks like Actua that empower and inspire youth to address this issue is crucial. We are taking an active role in preventing and addressing cyberviolence because it is real violence, with real harm, and real consequences. We will continue to work with community partners, the private sector, and other levels of government to end gender-based violence in all of its forms," said The Honourable Maryam Monsef, P.C., M.P. Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality.

Today's announcement took place at Actua funder Lockheed Martin's IMPACT Centre with over forty youth and parents from across Ottawa. Youth had the opportunity to hear from Gary Fudge, Lockheed Martin Canada RMS Vice President and General Manager, and go on a special tour of the Centre and learn about Lockheed Martin's state of the art technologies, and what a career in technology and engineering could look like.

About Actua: Actua is Canada's largest science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach network representing 39 university and college-based members. Each year, Actua's growing network of member organizations reach over 350,000 young Canadians in 500 communities nationwide. Actua focuses on the engagement of underrepresented youth through specialized programs for Indigenous youth, girls and young women, at-risk youth and youth living in Northern and remote communities. Its national InSTEM program reaches over 35,000 Indigenous youth per year in over 200 Indigenous communities. Actua's major funding partners include: Government of Canada, Google Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, RBC Foundation, Suncor Energy Foundation, TD, Microsoft Canada, Finning Canada, Imperial, Toyota Canada Foundation, GE Canada, Mastercard, CIRA and Lockheed Martin Canada. For more information about Actua, visit actua.ca.

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