



visions
2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

BUILDING STEM PATHWAYS



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WORDS FROM THE ORGANIZATION

From the Board Chair and CEO

As we look back on the past year, we are immensely proud of the strides we've taken in advancing our mission. At Visions of Science, our mission to transform STEM is not just a lofty ideal—it's a reality that we're actively shaping every day.

In 2023, Visions of Science embarked on a transformative journey with the launch of our STEM Pathways programming. This marked a significant milestone in our efforts to provide tailored engagement and support for youth at every stage of their development. By tripling our reach and engaging over 3,000 young minds, we've equipped the next generation of innovators to pursue their passions and unlock their full potential.

Our impact speaks volumes, with a resounding 100% of participants feeling driven to pursue STEM programs in postsecondary education. We are laying the groundwork for a future where every young person has the opportunity to thrive.

But our work is far from over. As we continue to break down barriers and foster meaningful connections within our communities, we invite you to join us on this journey of transformation. Together, we can build a brighter, more equitable future where STEM knows no bounds.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our shared vision. With your partnership, there's no limit to what we can achieve.



Dr. Eugenia Addy
CEO,
Visions of Science



Keddone Dias
Board Chair,
Visions of Science

Thank you to our 2023 Board of Directors and Staff Team, who helped make this work possible! Learn more at: www.vosnl.org/our-team

VISIONS OF SCIENCE

OUR BOLD MISSION

Visions of Science is a charitable organization on a mission to transform communities, society, and the planet through equitable access to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

OUR BOLD FOCUS

We are committed to advancing STEM equity by engaging Black and other racialized youth from low-income communities across the Greater Toronto Area who experience significant barriers to participation. They are critical architects for social transformation and are well-positioned to impact change in their communities and beyond.



OUR BOLD IMPACT

A new STEM future, one youth at a time

➔ **19,000+**
youth engaged to date

➔ **3,000+**
youth impacted annually

➔ **30+**
communities reached

Through our programming, we aim to develop youth who are:



Curious - Youth understand the power of STEM and demonstrate a strong desire to continue to explore and learn about the world around them.



Competent - Youth possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and capabilities to accomplish their goals, solve complex problems, and excel in STEM.



Confident - Youth are aware of their unique strengths and are certain of their capacity to persist in STEM learning and be successful.



Connected - Youth are surrounded by a supportive network of mentors, peers and resources that foster belonging and amplify their access to STEM.



Our work and focus will radically transform the STEM landscape by:



Fuelling Education Momentum
Increasing youth participation in STEM courses, fostering intentions to pursue STEM careers, and boosting high school graduation rates.



Building Continuums of Success
Supporting the seamless transition to and through postsecondary education, with a rise in STEM degree participation and successful graduation rates.

Shaping the Future of Innovation

Guiding students from STEM education to impactful careers, driving the growth of youth actively contributing to STEM fields.



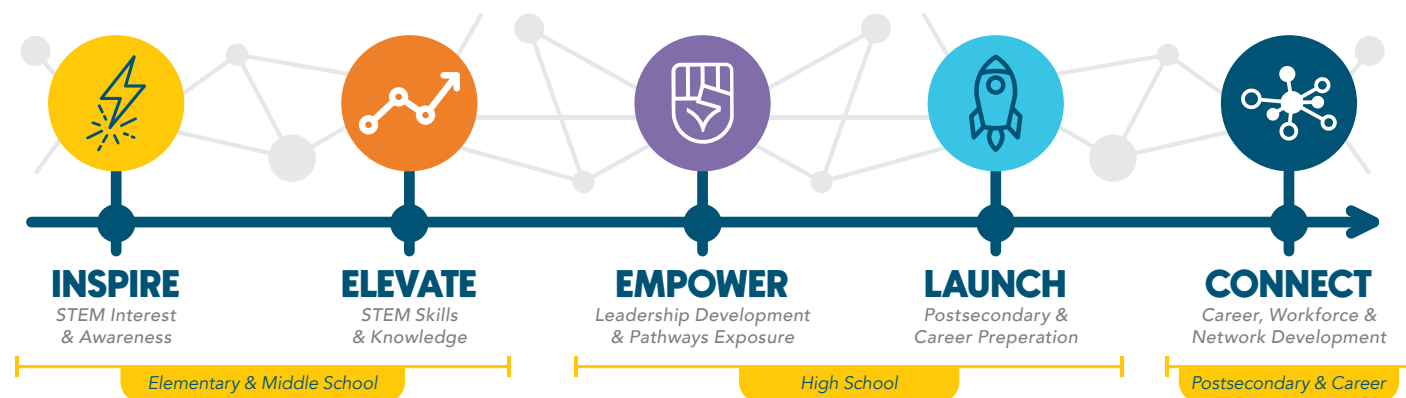
With this foundation, youth are well-positioned to be bold and active contributors to STEM and society – both today and into the future.

VISIONS OF SCIENCE

OUR BOLD APPROACH

Our strategic approach centers around delivering impactful and holistic STEM programming that supports youth at crucial stages of their educational journey. Our initiatives ensure that young people have the resources and support they need to excel in STEM fields.

By focusing on key points in youth development, we are nurturing the next generation of STEM leaders and building a more equitable and diverse STEM community. Check out the awesome year that we had!



OUR 2023 IMPACT

In 2022, Visions of Science took a bold step as we fully launched our groundbreaking STEM Pathways programming and expanded our

broader reach in communities and to the public! Across all of our initiatives, we:

- 3,000+** Impacted over **3000 youth** in STEM Pathways programming through workshops, training, camps, employment and career readiness opportunities, and more
- 100+** Equipped over **100 caregivers and educators** through curriculum support and workshops
- 1,500+** Engaged over **1500 community members from 25 communities across the GTA** through Roadshows and events

“Science wasn’t in my plan, but Visions introduced me to STEM through camps and trips, boosted my confidence and inspired my dream of becoming a game developer”

Gabrielle, (Participant, Grade 8)

CREATING STEM PATHWAYS

Our programs and initiatives create an accessible and supportive STEM learning network. This ensures that our participants are knowledgeable in STEM fields, skilled and confident as they progress from childhood to

adolescence and into adulthood. Our “STEM Pathways” model provides focused engagement and support for youth at each stage of their development.



STEM SPARKS: INSPIRING MINDS



698 STEM SPARKS YOUTH IMPACTED

Our STEM Sparks program aims to ignite curiosity and passion for STEM among youth by exposing them to engaging and relevant learning experiences. Through collaborative efforts with community partners such as the **Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS)** and **Lay-Up Youth Basketball**, we deliver multi-session STEM workshops led by our dedicated staff.

The Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS) helps remove barriers to education that prevent students from thriving in school. Through their Beyond 3:30 after-school program, we are able to increase access to high-quality STEM education opportunities for 337 youth from January -

June 2023. TFSS shares our commitment to equity and access, making them an invaluable partner in our efforts to empower youth through STEM.

Lay-Up Youth Basketball is a community-based organization that uses basketball as a vehicle for positive youth development. By integrating STEM workshops into their programming, Lay-Up Youth Basketball creates holistic learning experiences that foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Our collaboration with Lay-Up Youth Basketball enables us to reach youth in unique and engaging ways, leveraging their passion for basketball to spark interest in STEM.



Improved STEM Attitudes: Over **80% of participants** reported a positive shift in their attitudes towards STEM after engaging with STEM Sparks, demonstrating a tangible increase in enthusiasm and interest.



Increased Interest in STEM: More than **60% of participants** expressed a desire to engage further in STEM activities on their own time, indicating a significant impact on their personal interests and aspirations.



Enhanced STEM Knowledge and Awareness: Over **75% of participants** reported an increase in their STEM knowledge and awareness, indicating the effectiveness of the program in delivering educational content in an engaging manner.

“My favourite thing about STEM Sparks is learning more about STEM and understanding how fun it is. I feel this way because experiments are often quite boring and feel like a waste of time because I don't usually learn anything from them because my learning style is through fun things, and I like learning when it is fun.”

STEM Sparks Participant

SPORT & STEM: SPORTS, STEM AND LIFE SKILLS!

375 YOUTH ENGAGED (OCT. 2022 - MAY 2023)

7 SCHOOLS

In collaboration with **MLSE Launchpad**, our Sport and STEM program offers an innovative curriculum that combines STEM education with on-court physical activities. Youth from some identified “priority” schools engage in four half-day sessions, discovering the connections between sports and STEM

concepts. Led by Visions of Science and MLSE LaunchPad coaches, participants explore STEM principles through soccer, basketball, football, and hockey. Each sport session is paired with interactive STEM lessons, creating engaging and immersive learning experiences.



76% of youth agreed that it was easier to learn new concepts through sports than in a typical class lesson.



65% of youth agreed that the sports activities in this program helped them to learn new concepts in science, technology, engineering and math.



LIFE SKILLS INTEGRATION

- **Critical Thinking:** Participants enhance their problem-solving skills by analyzing sports-related challenges and engaging in STEM-focused activities that encourage logical thinking and creative problem-solving.
- **Grit and Resilience:** The program instills perseverance and determination through tasks that require sustained effort and resilience, preparing youth to overcome obstacles in academics and personal life.
- **Teamwork:** Team-based activities within sports and STEM modules emphasize collaboration and effective communication, fostering skills in conflict resolution and mutual support.
- **Leadership Development:** Opportunities for leadership emerge as participants take on roles that foster confidence, initiative, and the ability to motivate and inspire others, laying the foundation for future success.



As we reflect on a successful year of interdisciplinary learning, holistic development, and empowerment, we are inspired by the growth, resilience, and leadership demonstrated by our participants.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding access to innovative educational opportunities and equipping youth with the skills and confidence they need to thrive in an ever-changing world.

STEM ACADEMY: ELEVATING KNOWLEDGE

The STEM Academy, our intensive STEM-based development and academic support program, is designed to prepare youth for success in STEM Pathways. This year, we launched the

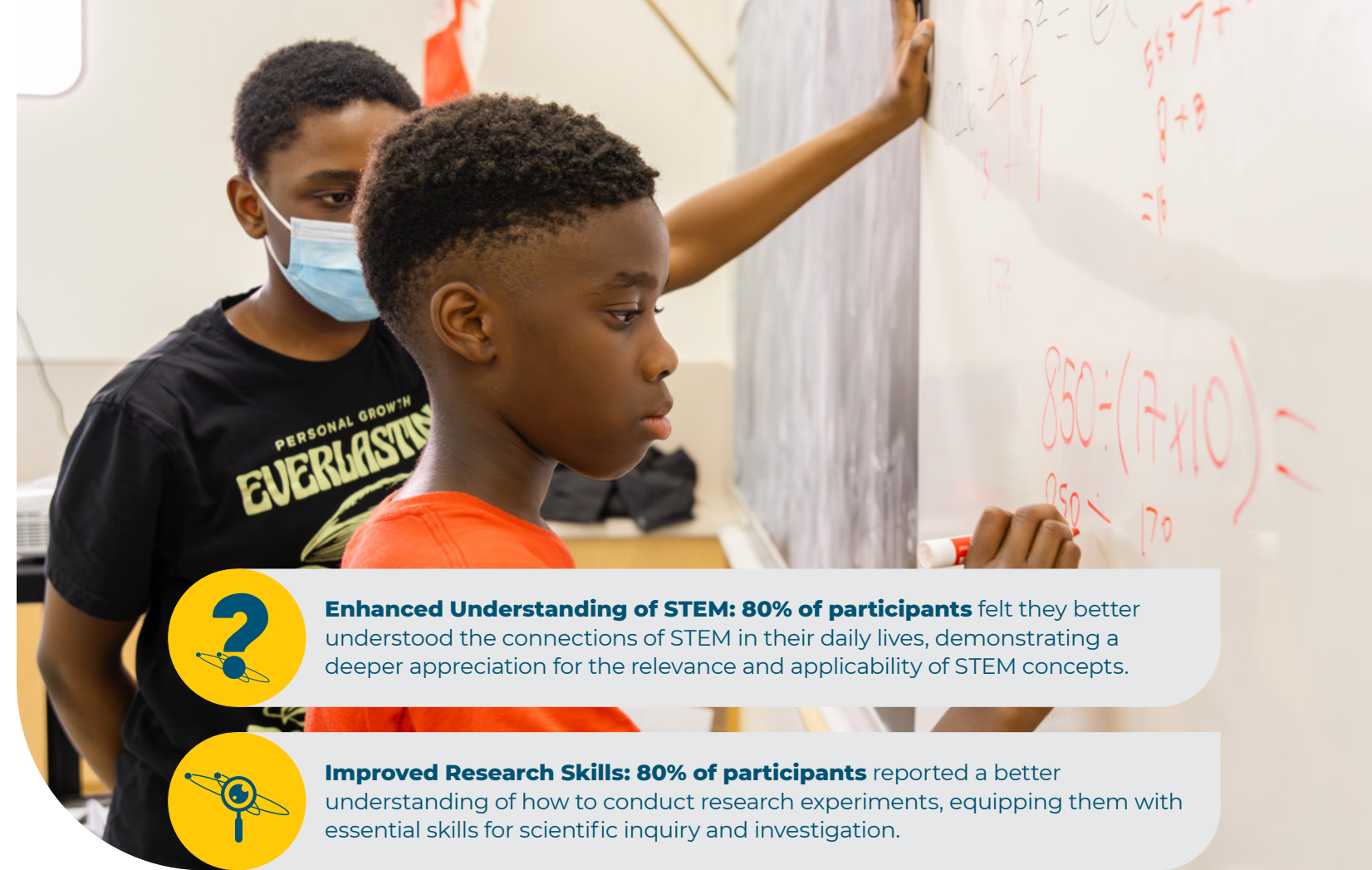
STEM Academy for students in grades 6 to 8, providing comprehensive support in science, math, and STEM skill-building.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hands-on Learning:** Youth participated in hands-on STEM workshops, field trips, and interactive modules, gaining practical experience and insight into various STEM disciplines.
- **Academic Support:** Through 1:1 and group tutoring sessions, students received personalized academic support in fundamental science and math concepts,

enhancing their understanding and confidence.

- **Career Exploration:** STEM career exploration sessions provided students with valuable insights into potential STEM career paths, inspiring them to pursue their passions and aspirations.



Enhanced Understanding of STEM: 80% of participants felt they better understood the connections of STEM in their daily lives, demonstrating a deeper appreciation for the relevance and applicability of STEM concepts.



Improved Research Skills: 80% of participants reported a better understanding of how to conduct research experiments, equipping them with essential skills for scientific inquiry and investigation.



Enhanced Mathematical Abilities: 73% of participants felt more confident in spotting mathematical patterns and relationships, indicating significant growth in their mathematical reasoning skills.

INTEGRATION INTO SCHOOL LIFE

Thanks to the dedication of youth and staff, the Visions STEM Academy has become an integral part of the school community. With a dedicated Visions of Science room and youth proudly sporting our T-shirts, the program has made a lasting impact on the lives of students at **Earncliffe Senior Public School in Brampton.**

We extend our heartfelt thanks to former Principal **Kevin Sebastian** and the dedicated staff team for their support and championing of the STEM Academy. Congratulations to all the youth for their achievements, and we look forward to the program's return in the fall!

"I want to join again because I wasn't the smartest kid and STEM Academy helped me develop and grow."

STEM Academy Participant

STEM CAMPS: TAKING YOUTH TO NEW HEIGHTS!

Our **Summer STEM Camps** provide immersive, full-day experiences for youth from grades 5-7 across GTA communities. Participants engage in hands-on workshops, projects, and fun trips, addressing local community issues using STEM knowledge and skills. Camps feature modules, activities, and

trips focused on chemistry, biology, technology, ecology, design thinking, math, and social-emotional learning, fostering a holistic approach to STEM education.



Increased Interest and Enjoyment: 76% of participants reported increased interest in science, while **70%** found science more enjoyable, igniting curiosity and passion for STEM subjects.



Boosted Confidence: 69% of participants reported increased confidence in their ability to excel in science, demonstrating a positive impact on self-esteem and academic self-efficacy.



Enhanced Comprehension: 68% of participants reported an increase in science comprehension, indicating the effectiveness of the camp's hands-on learning approach.

As we celebrate the success of another summer, we are proud to have engaged 184 participants from 7 different communities to explore, innovate, and grow through our

Summer STEM Camps. We look forward to continuing to inspire future generations of STEM leaders!

STEM LEADERS: PROPELLING INNOVATORS OF TOMORROW

STEM Leader: Empower provides youth from grades 8-10 with immersive STEM experiential learning and leadership opportunities, preparing them for postsecondary education and careers. This summer, youth explored

postsecondary planning, project planning skills, and experiential learning through on-campus and corporate field trips, fostering a deeper understanding of STEM career pathways.



“I think this program greatly improved my confidence to pursue a STEM career because it has shown me that people can be happy and take care of their family while working a job related to STEM”

STEM Leaders: Empower Participant



Improved Relationships: 84% of participants reported enhanced relationship-building skills, strengthening connections with peers and mentors.



Increased Career Confidence: 76% of participants gained a better understanding of STEM career pathways, while **69%** reported greater confidence in pursuing a STEM career, inspiring them to pursue their passions.



Enhanced Skills: 62% of participants reported improvements in STEM knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities, equipping them with the tools needed for future success.

Thank you to all of our partners who hosted unforgettable experiences for our youth. Through the Empower Leadership Program, we are shaping the next generation of STEM

leaders, empowering them to make meaningful contributions to their communities and beyond.

STEM LEADERS: GEARING UP FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

STEM Leaders: Launch is a year-long experiential and work-integrated learning program designed to empower youth from

grades 11-12 with training, coaching, paid job opportunities, and connections to financial assistance for postsecondary education.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Comprehensive Training:** Participants engaged in several academic and career readiness workshops, preparing them for success in STEM careers.
- **Valuable Internship Opportunities:** Youth gained hands-on experience through paid

internships with organizations such as Shift Health, Dynacare, and the Engineering, Chemistry and Astronomy departments at U of T, opening doors to potential STEM employment opportunities.



Increased Awareness: 100% of participants reported greater awareness of available STEM resources and support, enhancing their understanding of STEM career pathways.



Enhanced Career Development: 100% of participants affirmed that the program supported their STEM career development, providing valuable guidance and opportunities for growth.



Improved Sense of Belonging: 100% of participants reported an improved sense of belonging in STEM, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for their professional development.



Increased Employment Opportunities: 80% of internship participants reported gaining potential opportunities for meaningful STEM employment, highlighting the program's effectiveness in fostering career advancement.



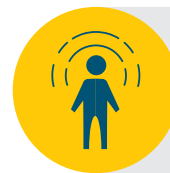
Through STEM Leaders: Launch, we are supporting youth to explore, excel, and thrive in STEM fields, equipping them with the skills

and confidence to pursue rewarding careers and make meaningful contributions to society.

STEM CONNECT: BRIDGING AMBITIONS

The **STEM Connect program** provides youth ages 18-25 access to valuable career resources, training opportunities, job placements, and peer networks to support their journey in STEM fields beyond high school and into postsecondary. This year, youth engaged in

conferences and science communication workshops, enabling them to expand their professional networks and enhance their communication skills.



Enhanced Career Skills: 85% of participants reported greater awareness of their STEM career-related skills, providing a solid foundation for their future success in STEM fields.



Increased Awareness: 77% of participants gained a deeper understanding of available STEM resources, including mentors, scholarships, and job opportunities, empowering them to navigate their STEM journey more effectively.



Strengthened Networks: 77% of participants reported improvement in their STEM networks, forging connections with peers and professionals that will support their growth and development in STEM fields.

SCIENCE FOR COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE

At our very first **Science for Communities Conference**, youth in our Connect program had the opportunity to hone their science communication skills and highlight their STEM research projects. Through interactive

presentations, youth received valuable feedback from STEM professionals and enhanced their networks. Many thanks to RBC Future Launch, the Counselling Foundation, and our guest judges for their support.

BREAKING DOWN FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

We are proud to celebrate **Peter Esemu-Ezewu** on being a recipient of the **2023 RBC Future Launch Scholarship for Black Youth!** This is the second year in a row that our youth have received this scholarship, and Peter joins previous recipients Sara Kydd and Marques McLean Robinson (2022).

One of the most significant barriers for youth in our programs as they plan for postsecondary education, the next step of their STEM journey, is tuition and ongoing support to enhance their networks. The RBC

Future Launch scholarship is valued at \$40,000 and includes other support such as mentorship, internship opportunities, academic and career planning, and networking.

Peter has participated in our programs since 2016, going from STEM Clubs to STEM Leaders to now a Peer Youth Researcher on our evaluation team! Peter is passionate about urban transit systems, especially railways, and is currently studying Mechanical Engineering at Humber College.



UPDATE ON SARA KYDD, 2022 RBC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Since receiving the RBC Future Launch Scholarship in 2022, Sara remains focused on her dream of pursuing a career in dermatology. As the first step in her journey, she is currently enrolled in her first year studying Health Sciences at Queens University. This past summer, Sara had the opportunity to

do research at the university level through an internship in the Chemistry Department at the University of Toronto. She shared this research with the community at our Visionary Expo event. We are inspired by Sara as she continues to seize every opportunity to reach her goal of becoming a dermatologist.

IMPACT AND LEARNING: NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Members of our team were invited to share their knowledge, experience, and learnings at national conferences this year.

At the Cannexus Conference in Ottawa, we discussed our core principles in advancing STEM career development through our years of learning in the STEM Leaders program. This included centering youth voices, providing youth with paid internship opportunities and investing in youth long-term.

This was followed by the Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC) Conference, where our team hosted a workshop called “STEM Equity: Barriers and Opportunities for Low-Income and Racialized Youth.” Through this workshop, conference participants had the opportunity to engage in insightful conversations to advance STEM equity and empower youth.

Lastly, we participated in a panel at the Canadian Science Policy Conference (CSPC) and discussed “Black Inclusion in STEM: Strengthening Education and Employment Pathways for Black Students, Graduates and Professionals,” which highlighted the urgency and importance of Black inclusion in STEM. Our team also contributed to the related editorial, “Acting at all levels to reverse negative impacts of Anti-Black racism in STEM: A call to build pathways through barriers for Students, Graduates & Professionals.”

As knowledge transfer and advocacy continue to be part of our organizational priorities to amplify awareness of the needs of youth and their communities, we value these opportunities to highlight our work and coordinate efforts that enhance STEM equity for all.



NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUTH IN STEM

Support from our donors and partners helps us strive toward our mission and vision as we enhance access to STEM for youth. We are very excited to share two NEW partners who have chosen to join the STEM movement:

Visions of Science was selected as part of the **NBA Foundation's** eighth round of grantees across Canada and the United States. This 18-month grant will support STEM education and engagement opportunities, specifically within our Empower, Launch, and Connect initiatives.



The **CCRM Foundation** has chosen us as their first charity for a multi-year partnership. CCRM works with cell and gene therapies and regenerative medicine technologies, which youth at Visions of Science will be able to engage with and explore.

To learn more about these initiatives, you can read the **Media Releases on our website.**



VISIONARY EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

VISIONARY EXPO

Over 100 youth from all of our programs were in the spotlight at this community event, which brought together families, partners, and supporters for an unforgettable day celebrating STEM. Through engaging showcases, youth shared their STEM interests based on the needs of their communities,

while guest judges provided them with feedback and assigned scores based on key criteria. Top scorers were awarded prizes, but it was clear from the faces of our youth and their proud family members that they were all winners.



VISIONARY EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

VISIONARY GALA

This year marked the triumphant return of our Visionary Gala event! Over 250 guests came together at Daniels Spectrum for an unforgettable evening dedicated to youth and the future of STEM. The focus of the evening was to immerse guests in our Bold Vision, and they also had the opportunity to be hands-on with STEM activities during cocktail hour.

Hosted by Tashauna Reid from CBC News, we heard an inspiring keynote speech from our CEO, Dr. Eugenia Duodu Addy, on the power of collective action, and stories from youth participants, Gabrielle, Thaddeus, Hodan and David on their experience in our programming - a definite highlight.

We are thankful to everyone who bought a ticket or table and for the support of our sponsors including:

RBC - Visionary Sponsor
 Birch Hill Equity and Linamar - Empower Sponsors

Our next signature Visionary Gala event will be in 2025! Make sure to join our mailing list to receive the latest updates on future events and opportunities.



OUR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

All financial data presented is from our 2023 financial statements audited by Pennylegio Chung LLP for the period January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

For a full copy of our 2023 audited financial statements, please click [here](#).

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023	2023	2022
REVENUE		
Contributions (note 5)	\$ 2,414,974	\$ 1,566,485
Events	128,063	-
Interest and other	<u>49,285</u>	<u>7,321</u>
	<u>2,592,322</u>	<u>1,573,806</u>
EXPENSES		
Personnel	2,060,722	1,343,048
Non-personnel expenses (note 6)	235,771	97,455
Fundraising	82,160	1,808
Occupancy	61,512	61,101
Office and general	47,694	55,910
Professional fees	36,626	55,901
Insurance	<u>5,797</u>	<u>5,328</u>
	<u>2,530,282</u>	<u>1,620,551</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	62,040	(46,745)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>1,609,720</u>	<u>1,656,465</u>
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 1,671,760</u>	<u>\$ 1,609,720</u>

OUR SUPPORTERS

Visions of Science gratefully acknowledges gifts received between January to December 2023. We would like to thank our numerous individual donors, many of whom support us monthly. We also acknowledge those who gave to the organization anonymously.

VISIONARIES



CHAMPIONS

HEATHER SHEEHAN FOUNDATION



INNOVATORS



BUILDERS



CATALYSERS



AMBASSADORS

AMD
BIRCH HILL EQUITY
CANADA SUMMER JOBS
CATHERINE AND MAXWELL MEIGHEN FOUNDATION
DUNLAP INSTITUTE OF ASTRONOMY AND ASTROPHYSICS
HODGSON FAMILY FOUNDATION
INTERAC CORP.
LINAMAR
MALVERN FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE
PDSB
TELUS FRIENDLY FUTURES FOUNDATION

EXPLORERS

ALTAS
GARDINER FOUNDATION
MCLEAN FOUNDATION
ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE
QUALCOMM FOUNDATION
RASI, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
ROCHE CANADA
ROSE CORPORATION
TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING
TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, SCIXCHANGE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA





TRANSFORM THE FUTURE OF STEM

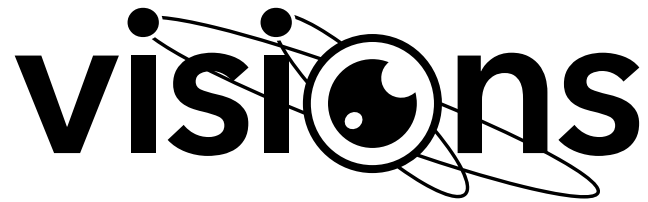
DEVELOPING LEADERS. DISMANTLING BARRIERS. INSPIRING AGENTS OF CHANGE.

Visions of Science is working towards a **Bold vision for a new STEM future**. At the centre of this vision is **our goal of reaching 10,000 youth annually** to begin their journey in STEM creating a more equitable future for us all.

You can help make this Bold Vision a reality by becoming a monthly donor. As a monthly donor, your ongoing commitment will provide:

- **Sustainability** for our programming
- **Continuity** for the youth and communities we engage with; and
- **A ladder of STEM learning opportunities** for youth from grades 3 all the way to age 25

Help us advance STEM equity and build a BOLD new STEM future. **Join our community as a monthly donor today!**



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