

## MindFuel awarded \$2M in CanCode funding to support underrepresented youth across Canada

*Funding to help Canadian educators, girls, youth with disabilities, rural youth, youth-at-risk, and Indigenous youth to build digital skills*

**July 22, 2019** – Calgary, AB – [MindFuel](#) (Science Alberta Foundation) is pleased to announce it has been approved to receive \$2,000,000 as part of the [CanCode](#) program. Funded by the department of [Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada \(ISED\)](#), the CanCode program exists to provide students in kindergarten through grade 12 opportunities to develop digital skills – including coding, data analytics and digital content development – and to provide training and professional development in these areas to pre-service, elementary and secondary teachers.

As part of MindFuel's continued effort to reach groups that are traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields – including girls, youth with disabilities, Indigenous youth, and youth residing in rural and remote areas, including northern Canada – the \$2M in CanCode funding is part of the overall \$9M project supported by MindFuel's partner network, and will be used to develop educational resources that support and enhance digital skills and coding learning initiatives, and teacher training and professional development opportunities. With the confirmation of CanCode funding, MindFuel has even greater capacity to design and distribute digital skills-building content for students and teachers.

As part of the CanCode application, MindFuel identified five main objectives:

- to increase interest and participation in digital skills development
- to increase the application of digital skills in students' future careers
- to increase the number of educators who can confidently teach digital skills
- to provide evidence-based research to support the impact of digital skills
- to develop a community of coding hubs to support long-lasting learning of these skills

“Digital skills are essential in today’s technologically-driven society,” said Shahauna Siddiqui, Chair, MindFuel Board of Directors. “To best equip Canada’s youth to become the knowledge workers of tomorrow, it’s imperative we give them tools today to help them move from being mere passive consumers of digital content to active creators and innovators in our ever-advancing technological workforce.”

“When a young person is shown the vast possibilities that lay before them, and is supported on their journey, they can envision a future they may have once believed to be unreachable,” said Cassy Weber, CEO, MindFuel. “With CanCode funding, we will continue to engage, inspire and support a future workforce where girls, youth with disabilities, youth in rural and remote areas, economically-disadvantaged youth, Indigenous youth, youth-at-risk, and other underrepresented groups, will be successful in Canada’s digital economy.”

Quality STEM-learning resources focused on coding and digital literacy will be made widely and freely available to students across Canada via our award-winning online learning platform, [Wonderville.org](#), and is projected to reach more than 124,000 girls, youth with disabilities,

Indigenous youth, and youth living in rural or remote areas across Canada by March 2021. Additionally, five percent of those students reached will receive instruction as part of an in-the-field initiative designed specifically for youth with disabilities and youth-at-risk in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia.

"Technology impacts our everyday lives. Learning digital skills and coding, and how technology serves us will open so many doors to our young people," said the Honourable Kent Hehr, Member of Parliament for Calgary Centre. "Giving the opportunity for all children to become tech savvy and learn coding will further strengthen our success as a country."

"We are excited to partner with MindFuel – which has 30-years of success delivering quality STEM-learning opportunities, blended with coding skills on robogarden.ca intelligent platform for educators and learners across Canada – to bring new, high-in-demand resources and in-the-field-training to educators and underrepresented youth," said Mohamed Elhabiby, CEO of RoboGarden Inc. "We are confident that together we will make a significant contribution across the country to students' development of coding and digital literacy skills and impact learning outcomes in this rapidly growing and crucial field."

For K12 educators, MindFuel's digital skills development initiative will focus on a training-the-trainer model, which has been a core area of expertise for 30 years. Via Wonderville.org, educators across Canada will receive free, universal access to webinars and training events, professional learning modules and training certification as they become competent in coding and digital literacy instruction. And in-the-field training for teachers will take place in cities and towns across Canada where populations of youth-at-risk and youth with disabilities reside.

MindFuel's network of partners enabling development and in-the field-training includes:

- [Algoma Family Services](#), Sault Ste. Marie, ON
- [Carizon Family and Community Services](#), Kitchener, ON
- [Chinese Family Services of Ontario](#), Toronto, ON
- [CyberMentor, Schulich School of Engineering](#), University of Calgary, Calgary, AB
- [Family Service Ontario](#), Toronto, ON
- [Fort McMurray Catholic School Division](#), Fort McMurray, AB
- [Fort McMurray Public School Division](#), Fort McMurray, AB
- [KW Counselling Services](#), Kitchener, ON
- [RoboGarden Inc.](#), Calgary, AB
- [SchulichIgnite, Schulich School of Engineering](#), University of Calgary, Calgary, AB
- [Thrive Counselling Services Halton Inc.](#), Burlington & Oakville, ON

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#### About [MindFuel](#)

Established in 1990 by James (Jim) Gray, O.C., as Science Alberta Foundation, MindFuel is a registered charitable organization focused on creating future generations of innovators and problem-solvers – directly related to helping Canada diversify its economy through a focus on STEM education and career paths. (STEM – science, technology, engineering and math.) MindFuel supports teachers with award-winning programs and helps immerse students in the fun world of STEM through blended learning, which includes both digital and hands-on training, critical to advancing Canada's Innovation Agenda. For more information please visit [mindfuel.ca](http://mindfuel.ca).

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