



2024



COMMUNITY  
REPORT

# A Message from our President

## Heather Cruickshanks



On Behalf of Techsploration's Board of Directors and staff, I am so pleased to introduce our 2024 Community Report! This year-in-review allows us to reflect on our achievements from this past program year and allows us to share them with our special community of partners, role models, teachers, alumnae, and volunteers. Thank you all so much for your contributions and help in making this program year possible.

The 2024 program year drew our biggest crowds ever! For the first time, all three of our Nova Scotia Techsplorer Events were held at NSCC Campuses. and for the second year, our Ontario Techsplorer Event was held at the beautiful, waterfront Pembroke Campus of Algonquin College. Collectively, over 850 students, teachers, partners, and guests attended our events, and with supplemental programming, we reached almost 5,000 youth!

In July, we welcomed our new Executive Director, Janet Stalker. Janet's experience in youth science programs and non-profit management has guided her to dedicate much of her career to organizations that educate and inspire the next generation. We are excited to have Janet as part of our team!

These are just a few highlights from an incredible year. We look forward to your continued engagement in 2025!

## Throughout our 2024 program year

Techsploration delivered empowering educational content to

**4,500+ students** from **30+ schools** with help from **200+ volunteers**

# About Techsploration

**For over 26 years,** Techsploration has successfully delivered empowering educational content to young women and gender-diverse youth in Grades 9 through 12 through hands-on, mentor-led programming and two incredibly impactful online video series. Considered a national best practice, Techsploration is actively breaking barriers to ensure more women are exploring and entering in-demand careers in science, engineering, trades, and technology (SETT) fields where women are still significantly underrepresented.

In addition to exploring in-demand careers and various career pathways, young women benefit as their skills are enhanced in the areas of communication, leadership, entrepreneurship, and teamwork. **Techsploration works: 60% of Alumnae surveyed in 2023 are currently studying, training or working in a SETT career!**

## A Message from our Executive Director

### Janet Stalker



I am delighted to join the Techsploration team as Executive Director and to be part of such a dynamic and impactful organization. Although I have only been in the role a short time, it's clear that the high impact of this organization is a direct result of our incredible community of dedicated staff, partners, and volunteers (many of whom are alumnae).

Thank you for your outstanding contributions! I am committed to building on the strong foundation you've created and advancing Techsploration's work to reduce the gender gap in Canada's STEM and trades workforce. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue to inspire the next generation of innovators and leaders!



# Alumnae Update



## Ashley Bacon

Energy Scheduler at Emera Energy  
Techsploration Alumna, 2004

Ashley lives in Falmouth, NS, with her husband and children. Together, they manage a small hobby farm featuring chickens, cows, a pony, and a horse, where they also grow and raise much of their own food. She and her husband are also renovating their century-old farmhouse themselves, tackling a variety of DIY projects.

Ashley currently works as an Asset Manager for power generation facilities with Emera Energy, where she enjoys problem-solving and the variety her job offers.

### **What do you remember most about your experience with Techsploration?**

I remember how much fun I had with the other girls in our group going on trips to NSCC and working on our project. Also, getting to meet so many other girls joyfully expressing their passion for STEM topics.

### **Do you have any mentors who've helped you on your learning/career path?**

I have had some temporary, traditional mentors throughout my career that never really stuck. However, I have found a lot of my learning and meaningful work relationships have been with women who are my peers and are going through similar experiences. We share learnings and support one another.

### **How did Techsploration shape your decision to pursue a post-secondary education?**

I already knew I would pursue some kind of secondary education but participating in Techsploration did have an impact on what courses I took in high school. By following a STEM focuses course plan, I had the required courses to apply for Engineering.

### **What would you suggest to other young females who are unsure of what to pursue in the future?**

Do not limit yourself early. Even if you don't know what you want to be, take the classes that will keep the most options open in the future. Also, knowing what you don't want to do is just as important as knowing what you want.





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# Our Program

Our core programming is delivered in 4-phases throughout the school year.



## Techsploration Goes to Work

**December – March**

After applications are submitted, a teacher selects six to eight students in grade nine to be on their school's Techsploration team. Together, they research a science, engineering, trades, or technology career assigned to their team. With the help of a female role model working in that field, the team spends a day at her workplace, learns about her work, and creates a presentation.

## Techsploration Goes to School

**February – April**

The Techsploration team shares their experience and presentation with students at their school. Participants, staff, and invited guests are introduced to in-demand careers by participating in a round robin session with women working in these fields. Students ask the role models questions about their jobs, training, and education.



## Techsplorer Events

**April – May**

Techsploration teams from across the province gather together for a two-day conference to share their presentation with participants from other schools. The students get an in-depth look at multiple science, engineering, trades, and technology careers and participate in interactive presentations and workshops that aim to build confidence and leadership skills.

## Techsploration Alumnae Conference

**November**

Students in grades 10 – 12 are invited to this one-day conference for follow-up activities such as interactive workshops and a round robin session to learn about more career options, while also developing leadership and teamwork skills. They are encouraged to help teachers select the new school team and assist with the program. In grade 12, all participants can also apply for scholarships created especially for Techsploration by our sponsors and volunteers.



# Our Program

In addition to our core programming in Nova Scotia and PEI, we were thrilled to deliver an exciting variation of our program in Ottawa!

## Techsploration Goes to Work

**April**

Three (3) Renfrew County District School teams were paired with, and spent the day onsite with Encore Canada, Lockheed Martin, and Canadian Nuclear Laboratories.



## Techsploration Goes to School

**May**

These Techsploration team shared their experiences, prepared and gave their presentations with their peers at school.



## Techsplorer Event Ontario

**June**

Held at Algonquin College's beautiful Pembroke Campus, close to 50 Techsploration participants and guests enjoyed two days of workshops, presentations, and inspiring keynotes.





# Inspired. Empowered.

60%

*of surveyed alumnae are now studying, training, or working in a SETT field.*

Below are the results from alumnae who responded to our 2023 survey.

93%

*Increased self-esteem.*

77%

*Influenced to enroll in math and/or science courses beyond the basic requirements.*

100%

*Improved confidence about future career possibilities.*

86%

*Learned skills to use when applying for a job.*

91%

*Feel more confident speaking in public or with new people.*

93%

*Encouraged to pursue fields of education that would not have otherwise been considered.*

# Alumnae Update



## Meghan Martin

PhD Candidate in Biomedical Engineering  
Dalhousie University  
Techsploration Alumna, 2012

In 2021, Meghan was one of the winners of the Vanier Graduate Scholarship, Canada's most prestigious award for PhD researchers.

In January 2025, Meghan will join the Cardiovascular Matrix Remodeling Lab at Florida International University, working with Dr. Josh Hutcheson. Her research will center on developing treatments for calcific valve disease and exploring the molecular mechanisms behind maternal valve remodeling during pregnancy.

### **As a kid, were there any formative experiences that helped to shape your path?**

High school were the years that really shaped me into the scientist I am today. I felt encouraged to enjoy the sciences like biology, calculus, chemistry, and physics. I was able to compete on a robotics team, where I was the only girl, and it gave me the confidence to pursue more knowledge in science.

### **How did Techsploration impact your career choice or chosen career?**

Techsploration had a huge impact on my career! It made me aware of what was out there, and what I might be interested in, and it helped me eliminate what wasn't for me. It boosted my self-esteem and helped me learn how to be more comfortable with public speaking! It impacted my chosen career path because if I didn't participate in Techsploration I wouldn't have all the amazing females rooting for me and supporting me along the way!

### **What advice would you give to young women who might be considering a career in your field?**

It is okay not to know everything or not be certain in your knowledge, I used to be afraid that I didn't have the full knowledge I needed. I thought because I was a woman that I needed to know everything in order to be smart and prove myself to those around me. No one knows everything, and it is okay to ask questions!

Thank you to our 2024 Techsplorer Event Division C  
Lunch Sponsor, Build Right Nova Scotia!





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## Thank you to our 2024 Techsploration Alumnae Conference Lunch Sponsor, Michelin!



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# Alumnae Update



## Gillian Stanton, B.Eng, MASC

Regional Program Coordinator  
Imhotep's Legacy Academy  
Techsploration Alumna, 2012

Gillian resides along the picturesque Digby Neck & Islands Scenic Drive, the ancestral home of her father's family. Her mother is from Jordantown, one of the historic African Nova Scotian communities near the Town of Digby.

Gillian is currently involved in the "Culture of Growing" program for Imhotep's Legacy Academy, where she teaches African Nova Scotian and Black youth about agricultural science and entrepreneurship.

### **What do you remember most about your experience with Techsploration?**

Firstly, I really valued traveling to NSCC to see the Engineering program led by a female instructor. My highlight from the program overall was traveling to the conference and being able to circuit through the different roles in a hands on way to see if that role was a fit for me.

### **What would you suggest to other young females who are unsure of what to pursue in the future?**

Do not let fear of *the unknown* rule your decisions and squash your potential! Take advantage of any opportunity (program, extra curricular, tutoring, job, etc) that interests you and practice overcoming that fear. If you are worried that an opportunity or career is *out of your league* because it requires a specific set of skills, I challenge you to look for those skills in your current day-to-day life. Most extracurricular activities like sports, jobs, and even your high school career, shows you already have transferable skills and that you can learn new ones.

### **How did Techsploration shape your decision to pursue a post-secondary education?**

Coming from a small town where there isn't a whole lot of diversity in employment fields, I was extremely hesitant if I would be cut out for the jobs in STEM that interested me. Techsploration enabled me to see a wide range of careers, be paired with a female role model, and see other opportunities at the conferences made it easy for me to see myself in those STEM roles.



# Thank you to our 2024 Techsploration Alumnae Conference Presenting Sponsor, Sobeys!



## Empowering Women in Tech: Driving Innovation Through Diversity & Inclusion

As a family nurturing families, we embed DE&I into everything we do, recognizing that supporting women in technology is essential for fostering innovation and success. We're dedicated to empowering women to grow impactful careers in tech, creating pathways for development and making sure our technology teams reflect the communities we serve.



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# Alumnae Update



## Maria Young

2nd year student of Applied Forensic Psychology  
St. Francis Xavier University  
Techsploration Alumna, 2023

Maria Young, originally from Eskasoni First Nation in Unama'kik (Cape Breton, NS), is currently in her second year at St. FX University, pursuing an Honours BA in Applied Forensic Psychology. One of her passions is sharing and educating others about her culture. She is also an Indigenous student peer mentor on campus. Following her undergraduate studies, Maria plans to pursue a career in Indigenous law.

### **What do you remember most about your experience with Techsploration?**

A memory that stands out the most was going to the Techsplorer Alumnae Conference. It was such a great event that allowed me to learn about so many different career paths I had not considered before through hands-on workshops. I was also able to interact with members of the program from other schools and Techsploration Alumnae who were role models in many different fields.

### **How did Techsploration shape your decision to pursue a post-secondary education?**

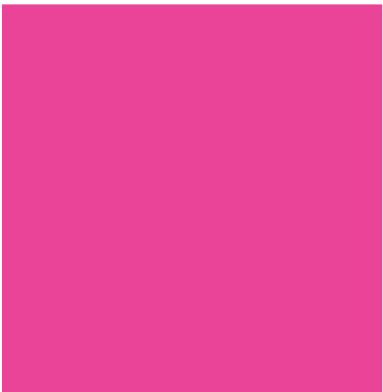
I was inspired by Techsplortaion Alumnae in fields like science, trades, and technology who were successful and passionate about their careers. They made me feel like I belonged in those spaces. I saw myself in them and saw education as a path to my career goals.

### **What makes you passionate about your studies?**

I'm studying forensic psychology because I want to study Indigenous law. I'm hoping that through my education I can fight the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the Canadian Justice System and make a difference for Indigenous communities like the one I grew up in.

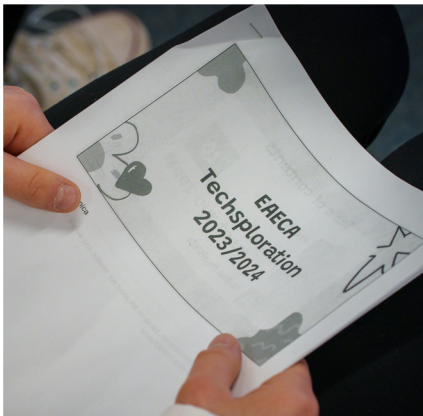
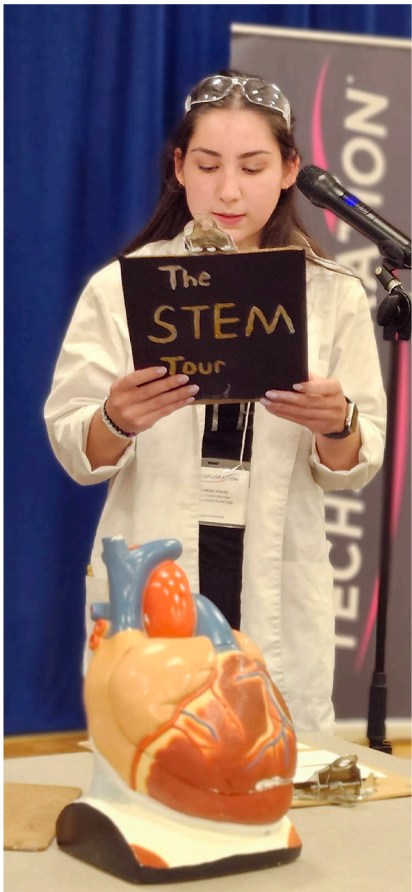


Thank you to our 2024 Techsplorer Event Division B  
Lunch Sponsor, Merit Nova Scotia!





Thank you to our 2024 Techsplorer Event Division A  
Lunch Sponsor, Bird Construction!



# Get Involved



## Provide a Female-Identifying School Team Role Model

Each school team is assigned a science, engineering, trades, or technology-related career to research with the assistance of a team role model employed in that career. They will:

- facilitate and host a 'Techsploration Goes to Work' day
- participate in a 'Techsploration Goes to School' event (virtually)
- participate in a Techsplorer Event



## Provide In-kind Products or Services

Techsploration relies on support from industry and educational organizations. If you can provide an in-kind donation of services, promotional products, or participate on a Techsploration committee, please feel free to contact us. We would be thrilled to discuss this with you.



## Provide Financial Support

Your financial support will ensure the ongoing success and expansion of the Techsploration program. While considering the benefits to your organization, we want to assure you that your contribution can be flexible, and payments can be made in one or more installments. Your gift can also be designated to individual event packages of your choosing.

In addition to sponsorship, you can **donate to Techsploration** and secure a charitable tax receipt through our partnership with the **NSCC Foundation**.



# Sponsor Benefits

## Development of a Local Workforce

Your support demonstrates leadership in promoting education, training, and youth initiatives that will lead to career and job opportunities in your region. Share job opportunities with our skilled alumnae network across the country!

## Addressing the Skills Shortage

The current skills shortage will require a significant recruitment effort to attract new workers to science, engineering, trades, and technology (SETT) fields. Techsploration directly addresses this challenge. Women make up over half the workforce and present an untapped resource of skilled workers in a wide variety of occupations. Involvement in Techsploration also assists organizations in attracting talented young people to post secondary educational training opportunities. For employers, this is a way to renew your workforce in future years and to start succession planning.

## Workplace Diversity

Your participation demonstrates the value you hold for workplace diversity. Techsploration is a proven program that supports employment equity initiatives and programs.

## Commitment to Your Community

The increased popularity of corporate citizenship has meant corporations have become a vital part of community and non-profit organizations. Techsploration offers you the opportunity to make a significant statement about your commitment to the communities in which you operate.

## Recognition

Your organization will be recognized in a variety of ways at our events, on our website and printed material, and through our growing social media channels.

If you decide that Techsploration is a great fit for your organization, please contact Janet Stalker at [janet.stalker@techsploration.ca](mailto:janet.stalker@techsploration.ca)



# Our Board of Directors

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## Our *small but mighty* Team



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Executive Director

**Natasha Snow**  
Director of Operations

**Margaret Davidson**  
Program Manager

**Meaghan Matheson**  
Marketing & Communications Specialist

**Maureen Duffy-Mason**  
Alumnae Outreach Coordinator

**Jenna Slaunwhite**  
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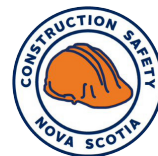
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## Pathfinder Partners



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