



**TECHSPLOATION®**

**2025**  
**Techsploation**  
**Community Report**

A Message from our President  
Techsploration Board of Directors  
Heather Cruikshanks



Monica Njoku  
Board of Directors Member

Heather Cruikshanks  
Board of Directors President

On behalf of Techsploration's Board of Directors and staff, I'm thrilled to share our 2025 Community Report with you!

This year has been one of growth and momentum. We launched a new four-year Strategic Plan to strengthen our foundation and guide our future through enriching our programming and expanding our reach.

Our three Techsplorer Events brought more than 200 students from across Nova Scotia and PEI to three NSCC campuses, including our first time at the Lunenburg Campus. Over two days, students connected, learned, and were inspired by other women+ in Skilled Trades and STEM.

With teachers, role models, and guests, plus our year-round programming, we reached over 4,000 youth this year!

We were also proud to welcome our first African Nova Scotian cohort, with a second group to join in the New Year. We're also strengthening our relationship with First Nations communities and adding a third Mi'kmaq school to our 2026 roster.

These milestones reflect the strength of our Techsploration community: partners, teachers, alumnae, role models, and volunteers.

Thank you for helping us inspire the next generation of women in Skilled Trades and STEM!

*[www.techsploration.ca](http://www.techsploration.ca)*





# Our Vision

A future where gender never limits career possibilities.

# Our Mission

We empower young women and gender-diverse youth to explore and confidently pursue careers in science, engineering, technology, and the skilled trades.

# Our Values

We are guided by respect and inclusion, empowerment, hands-on learning, collaboration, and a spirit of joy and creativity.

# Our Mission Roadmap

This year, Techsploration embarked on a new four-year strategic plan designed to strengthen our foundation and guide thoughtful growth. Grounded in our mission and values, the plan sets a clear direction for long-term sustainability, enriched programming, and expanded reach across Nova Scotia. We will do this through **three interconnected pillars**:

## Solidify our Foundation

Build a resilient organization with strong systems, people, and resources that support long-term sustainability.

## Enrich our Programming

Ensure programming remains relevant, impactful, and responsive.

## Expand our Reach

Our overarching vision for the next four years is to ensure long-term organizational sustainability, impact, and growth.





## About Techsploration

**For over 27 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.





## About Techsploration

Considered a national best practice, Techsploration is actively breaking barriers to ensure more women+ are exploring and entering in-demand careers in Skilled Trades and STEM fields where women are still significantly underrepresented.



# Our Program Model

Techsploration is a mentor-led experiential learning program that empowers young women+ to explore careers in Skilled Trades and STEM. Our core programming is delivered in four phases throughout the school year. Each school forms a grade 9 team of 6-8 female+ youth that is led by two teachers. The team is paired with a female+ role model from a Skilled Trades or STEM field, and then moves through the first three phases. Each school is then invited to send a team of 6-8 alumnae who are now in grades 10 through 12 to participate in the Alumnae Conference.



## PHASE 1 (Grade 9, Winter)

### Techsploration Goes to Work

After completing workplace safety training, provided in-kind by Construction Safety NS, each team participates in a hands on worksite visit at their role model's place of work, where they get to tour the worksite and meet other women+ working in Skilled Trades and STEM. In the weeks following, the team watches career videos from other role models, and researches/develops a presentation focused on their own role model's career.

Throughout these phases, participants engage in special presentations, activities and video content including safety training and discussion about the various education and training pathways available to enter Skilled Trades and STEM careers, as well as high school course requirements to advance into these pathways.



## **PHASE 2 (Grade 9, Winter/Spring)**

### **Techsploration Goes to School**

Teams finish work on their role model presentation, and deliver the presentation (usually in the form of a skit) to their school. They then have a chance to meet with additional female+ role models from diverse Skilled Trades and STEM careers.

## **PHASE 3 (Grade 9, Spring)**

### **Techsplorer Events**

The Grade 9 program culminates in two-day, interactive regional conferences where 6–8 teams come together with teachers and role models for hands-on career-readiness workshops, a career round robin, and a friendly competition showcasing their final presentations.

## **PHASE 4 (Grades 10-12, Fall)**

### **Techsplorer Alumnae Conference**

Schools send a team of 6–8 young women+ who previously completed the Grade 9 program to this one-day Alumnae Conference. The event features hands-on career workshops, demos, inspiring speakers, and a career round robin with female+ role models in working in Skilled Trades and STEM.







## Our 2025 Program

### Techsploration Goes To Work

Between February and May, 22 Techsploration teams from schools across Nova Scotia and PEI were matched with inspiring Role Models and spent a day exploring their workplaces firsthand. Among the MANY unique experiences, students took part in onsite visits to the Michelin tire plant, operated drones for remote sensing at UPEI, and spent a day in the field with NS Natural Resources and the Forestry Sector Council.

### Techsploration Goes To School

Teams then shared their experiences with peers at their schools, and refined their presentations in preparation for our three divisional Techsplorer Events.





# Your future, your trade.

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ON.**

NOVA SCOTIA



[ExploreTradesNS.ca](https://ExploreTradesNS.ca)

NOVA SCOTIA  
APPRENTICESHIP  
AGENCY

A background image showing a wave pool with several people floating in orange life rafts. The water is a vibrant turquoise color. In the upper right, a yellow structure with the word "LOADRITE" is visible. The scene is outdoors, and the overall atmosphere is one of a recreational or training activity.

*"I really enjoyed conversing with everyone. Those hours and days I spent, I didn't go on my phone for more than 10 minutes, and it was the happiest and least anxious I'd been."*

*Alexis Hayden, Eastern Shore Consolidated School*

## **Division A Techsplorer Event, NSCC Strait Area Campus**

The NSCC Strait Area Campus is celebrated for its Cape Breton hospitality, the most delicious baguettes in the history of bread, and its Nautical Institute, which features a wave pool, lifeboats, simulators, and a fire school. As part of the "Abandon Ship!" activity, our Guysborough Academy team, including their teacher and our Executive Director, suited up and plunged into the wave pool! They showcased real-life water safety skills, including how to enter and exit a life raft.





## Division B Techsplorer Event, NSCC Truro Campus

A standout moment from our Truro event was a powerful performance by the Allison Bernard Memorial High School (ABMHS) Girls' Drum Group. During the banquet dinner, they shared "The Honour Song", a song traditionally performed at gatherings and celebrations across Mi'kma'ki communities. The Drum Group also played "The Strong Woman Song" after their presentation the next day.

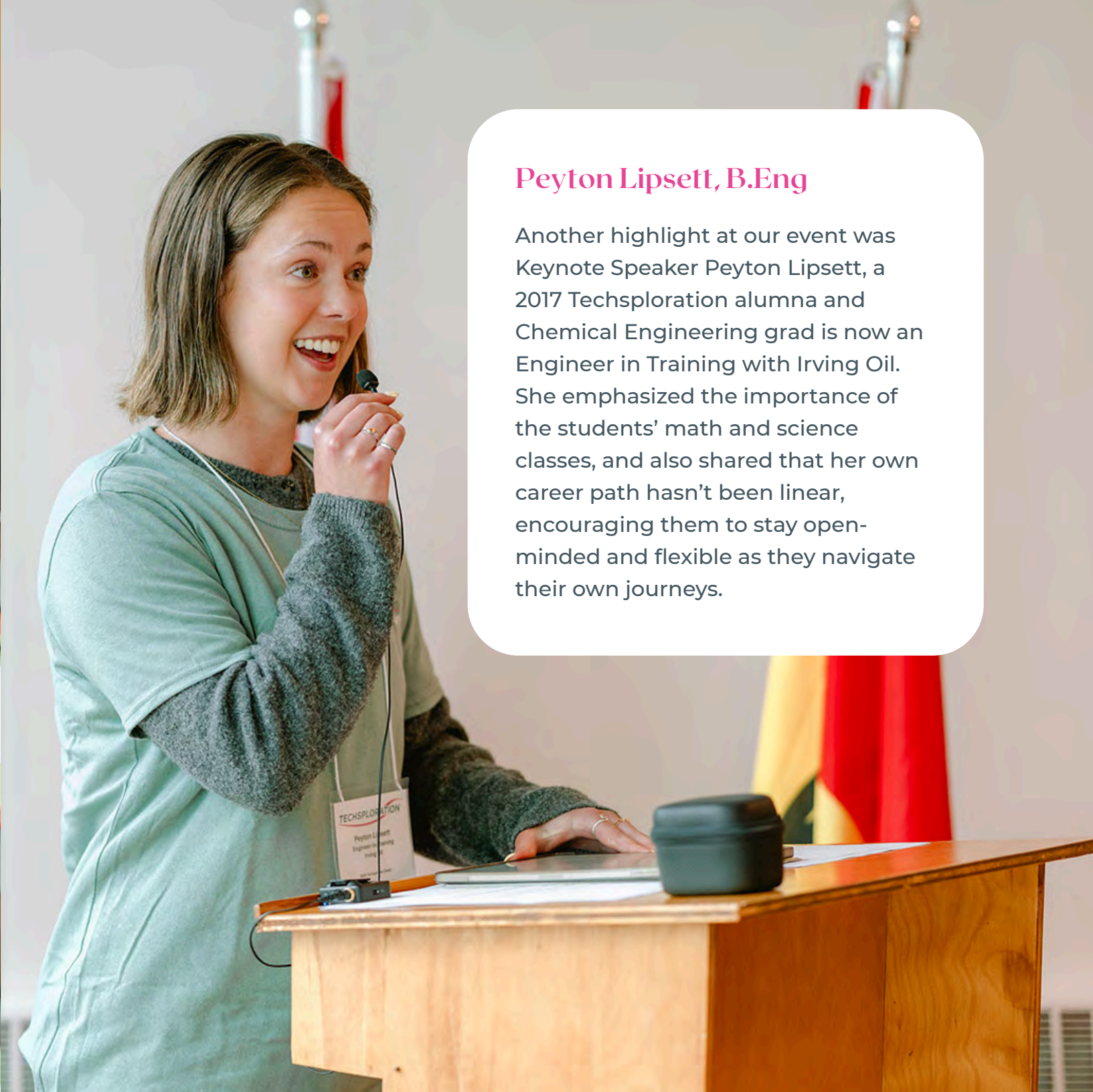
We were deeply honoured that the ABMHS Drum Group chose to share their music with us. Their integration of cultural traditions into the performance added depth and meaning to the experience, making it truly memorable.



## Division C Techsplorer Event, NSCC Lunenburg Campus

This was our very first event at the beautiful NSCC Lunenburg Campus on the south shore of Nova Scotia! Top prize (\$250) went to our Cobequid Education Centre team, who were paired with two Red Seal Welders from Irving Shipbuilding. They wrote, choreographed, and performed a rap, **“Whatchu Know ‘Bout Weldin”** featuring lyrics about the welding profession and staying safe on the job.





## Peyton Lipsett, B.Eng

Another highlight at our event was Keynote Speaker Peyton Lipsett, a 2017 Techsploration alumna and Chemical Engineering grad is now an Engineer in Training with Irving Oil. She emphasized the importance of the students' math and science classes, and also shared that her own career path hasn't been linear, encouraging them to stay open-minded and flexible as they navigate their own journeys.

The background image shows three young women in a workshop or laboratory. They are all wearing safety glasses. The woman on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and a black watch, holding a red hose. The woman in the center is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and is also holding a red hose. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with black sleeves. In the background, there is a microscope and other lab equipment. A pink rounded rectangle is overlaid on the top left of the image, containing white text.

# 60%

*of surveyed Techsploration  
alumnae in 2025 are currently  
training, studying, or working  
in Skilled Trades and STEM.*





In 2025, Techsploration  
has made a tangible impact  
on the youth we serve.

Among surveyed alumnae:

94%

*reported an increase in  
self-esteem*

89%

*reported feeling more  
confident.*

75%

*indicated Techsploration  
influenced their decision to  
enroll in post-secondary  
studies.*

## **Techsploration Alumnae Conference 1**

### **Clean Energy Themed**

### **NSCC Sydney Waterfront Campus**

We were thrilled to host the first of our two Alumnae Conferences at the stunning new NSCC Sydney Waterfront Campus. Sponsored by the NS Dept. of Natural Resources and Renewables, this campus was the perfect backdrop to highlight a thoughtful, sustainably designed space built with environmentally friendly practices.

Participants took part in interactive workshops such as Instrumentation Technician, Computer Science, Environmental Technician, and Metal Fabrication. These pathways lead to in-demand energy-sector careers like Energy Specialist, Smart Grid/Energy Systems Technician, and Wind Turbine Fabricator.





A vintage map of the Hudson River area, showing the river and surrounding land. A yellow and green cone-shaped object, resembling a traffic cone, is placed on the map. The word "HUDSON" is visible on the map.

## Techsploration Alumnae Conference 2

### Marine Themed

### NSCC Akerley Campus

2025 marked our first-ever year hosting TWO Alumnae Conferences! Our second conference, presented by title sponsor **Irving Shipbuilding Inc.**, featured an all-marine agenda. Students explored Ocean Mapping, Ocean Technology, CNC Machining, Power Engineering, and more.

The day was kick-started by an incredible and inspiring speech from MP Jessica Fancy, who is a former student, colleague, and now friend of Techsploration's Maureen Duffy-Mason. "Pull that chair up to the table, you deserve to be there," Jessica encouraged. "There is no space too technical, too complex, or too ambitious for you."

# 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(s)

## 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.





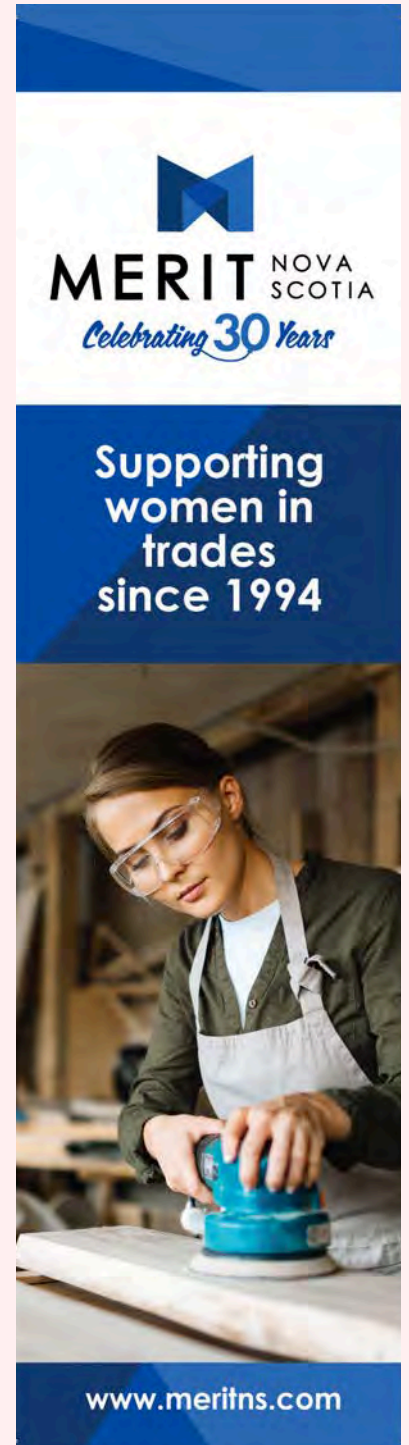
# Partnership Benefits

## 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!

## 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.





# Partnership Benefits

## 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.







# Partnership Benefits

## Addressing the Skills Shortage

The current skills shortage will require a significant recruitment effort to attract new workers to Skilled Trades and STEM 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.

This kind of sponsorship was demonstrated at our event in Truro, when we welcomed the Mobile Construction Experience, led by the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council (NSCSC).

The NSCSC Youth Engagement Team led students through an engaging exploration of skilled trades careers, giving them the chance to try out interactive simulators that provided a hands-on taste of life in the construction industry.



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 small but mighty Team L to R

**Janet Stalker**

Executive Director

**Margaret Davidson**

Program Manager

**Jenna Slaunwhite**

Program Coordinator

**Meaghan Matheson**

Communications Specialist

**Natasha Snow**

Director of Operations

**Maureen Duffy-Mason**

Alumnae Conference and  
Outreach Coordinator





# Our Board of Directors

## President

**Heather Cruickshanks**

Owner

L.E. Cruickshanks Sheet Metal Ltd.



## Vice-President

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Career Pathways Consultant

Nova Scotia Dept. of Education and

Early Childhood Development



**Monica Njoku**

Director, Industry and Community

Engagement, NSAA



**Sherry Donovan**

VP, CFSI Interiors, Millwork Division

Senior Director, Human Resources



**Sara Scott, P.Eng**

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NSCC Ivany Campus



**Ann Sylliboy**

Post Secondary Consultant

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey



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**Dr. Mita Dasog**

Faculty of Chemistry

Dalhousie University



**Donna MacGillivray**

Manager, Youth & Equity Programs

NSAA



**Teri Sproul, OCtd**

Intelligence Officer

Canadian Armed Forces



**Michel Raymond**

Division Vice President

NS Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters



**Ardena Paul**

Architectural Engineering Technician

Fathom Studio



**Akira Evans**

Program Navigator

Women Unlimited, NSCC





### Founding Program Partners



**nsc**

### Eureka Partners

**Canada**

**NOVA SCOTIA**  
**NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE**



Irving Shipbuilding Inc.





## Navigator Partners



## Pathfinder Partners



**DALHOUSIE**  
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF  
COMPUTER SCIENCE



## Compass Partners



A United Technologies Company



# Techsploration Role Model Opportunities

Techsploration is in need of female and gender-diverse professionals who work in Skilled Trades, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields to volunteer as role models in the 2026 Techsploration Program. Role model needs and opportunities are outlined below!

## Team Role Models

**Time Frame:** January - May

**Time Commitment:** Approx. 4 to 5 days

**Need:** 28 Team Role Models (female and/or gender diverse)

Team Role Models (TRMs) are paired with a Techsploration team competing to deliver the best career presentation in their regional division, based on you and your career. TRMs host a half-day workplace visit, attend the team's school presentation (in person or virtually), and take part in the 1.5-day Techsplorer Event for their division. This event includes career activities and final presentations from 7–8 school teams.

## Guest Role Models

**Time Frame:** Spring

**Time Commitment:** Approx. 4 hours per event (can commit to just one, or multiple events)

**Need:** Approx 30-35 Role Models per event (female and/or gender diverse)

Guest Role Models (GRMs) attend one or more Techsploration events to help participants explore SETT careers and connect directly with women+ in these roles. GRMs participate in round-robin activities (career fair-style stations that students rotate through). Each station typically represents one employer and may feature multiple female and gender-diverse GRMs from that organization.

Scan for more information!



Empowering *young women+*  
to explore careers in science,  
engineering, trades, & technology

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