Desjardins Foundation awards funds to 72 inspiring youth initiatives in Ontario, Alberta and New-Brunswick

Ottawa, March 20, 2023 – The Desjardins Foundation recently announced it will award $200,000 to 72 youth-focused projects across Ontario, Alberta and New Brunswick as part of its Desjardins Foundation Prizes.

Available to both school and community workers, the program provides financial assistance up to $3,000 for small projects that have a direct impact on elementary and secondary school students. These dedicated professionals know better than anyone how to engage and inspire youth, but often lack the needed resources to make it happen. The prize funds help turn their ideas into reality, and this year over 33,000 kids will benefit directly from these amazing projects.

Some of the awarded projects include:
- A mental wellness program by the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association to support the Black youth community in York region by providing free sessions of culturally relevant mental health education and support.
- The Gaia Project Sustainability Literacy Kits which provides elementary school classes in Fredericton with a curated selection of age-appropriate books relating to the environment.
- Lethbridge Collegiate Institute's Fitness Youth Inclusion Program which provides appropriate equipment for students with physical, mental or language barriers to promote healthy active lifestyles.

"Our youth play an important role in shaping our future and Desjardins is committed to helping young people achieve their dreams through projects that motivate them to work hard and stay in school," said Billy Boucher, CEO of Desjardins Ontario Credit Union. "Teachers and community

workers are on the frontlines with youth and see firsthand the needs and learning opportunities that show up in the everyday moments. We are extremely proud to support those who go above and beyond to provide young people with positive opportunities."

The Desjardins Foundation Prizes have been supporting projects across Ontario for more than 7 years and recently expanded the program to Alberta and New Brunswick in 2020. In total it has helped support 68,000 students and awarded more than $521,000 to 185 projects in these regions.

Students at Glengarry District High School receiving the Desjardins Foundation Prize

"The Desjardins Foundation Prizes have provided the needed financial support for our students to have access to meaningful hands-on real world learning projects. These projects have been a catalyst for the future of many young trades people. It has translated into better problem-solving abilities, more responsible individuals and most importantly, it has developed self-confidence in the young people who are working on the project. These opportunities provided by Desjardins have been life changing for several students," said Ryan Winter, Teacher at Glengarry District High School, a recipient of this year's Desjardins Foundation Prizes.

For more information about the program and this year's winners, go to desjardinsfoundation.com/prizes. The next application period starts in October 2023.

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About the Desjardins Foundation
Established in 1970, the Desjardins Foundation is a charitable organization that contributes to young people's academic success by awarding prizes and scholarships and partnering with respected organizations. In 2022, it awarded $5.5 million and benefited 479,000 young people through its initiatives. The Desjardins Foundation is a philanthropic arm of Desjardins Group, Canada's largest cooperative financial group. The Foundation helps enrich the lives of people and communities by promoting education.

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