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Partners in Science Recognize the Value of VSB Scientist in Residence Program Programs, Schools & Students

This school year is off to a busy start with the Scientist in Residence Program. Fifteen Vancouver School District teachers began their collaborative work with seven partner scientists so they can prepare their 341 primary and intermediate students for a scientific experience that'll give them a firsthand opportunity to see how fun and tangible science can be. The program is running in seven Vancouver elementary schools including Collingwood Neighbourhood (Bruce Annex), False Creek, Mount Pleasant, J.W. Sexsmith, Tecumseh, Laura Secord and Trafalgar

Each scientist partners with two or three teachers per school.



The scientists in residence are passionate about sharing their knowledge with teachers and students, and they return to the program year after year. Four of the scientists are from UBC and the others are self-employed contractors.

Participating scientists frequently mention the joy they receive seeing the enthusiasm and excitement in students' faces as they make discoveries while experimenting. Teachers note invaluable experiences and inspiration that comes from working with scientists and they greatly appreciate the funding for science supplies and field trips, thanks to Scientist in Residence Program's Partners in Science.

This year, the scientists and teachers will work together to develop and lead a wide range of lessons on subjects as diverse as temperate forests and biodiversity in local habitats to geology and plate tectonics, the ocean and even the mysterious secrets of the electron.



The aim of lessons like these is to excite, inspire and support elementary school children and teachers to discover the world through hands-on science. Scientists collaborate closely with teachers throughout the school year and engage children in the process of science through six or more visits in classrooms and on field trips. By the end of the program, most children have gained key scientific skills such as keen observation, critical thinking, and thoughtful communication – all of which are important, not just to science, but to life.

The hands-on science lesson plans developed this school year will add to the over 200 hands-on science lesson plans available to the public at the [Scientist in Residence Program website](#).

The Scientist in Residence Program has been a labour of love for Paige Axelrod, the founder and managing director. On top of running the program, with assistance this year from Catriona Gordon, Axelrod is also in charge of coming up with sources to fund it.

Despite the challenge of finding donors during a financial recession, she says in many ways, the program sells itself. Donors recognize the terrific value she and the scientists bring to the elementary school

classroom each year. It's part of the reason the number of Partners in Science continues to grow. This year's key funders include: The Rix Family Foundation; CIBC Wood Gundy, Richmond Office; RBC Foundation; Pfizer Canada; Xenon Pharmaceuticals; The Centre for Drug Research and Development (CDRD); Shona Ellis; and Sara Harris. In-kind supporters include: LifeSciences British Columbia; Fasken Martineau DuMoulin; and Skunkworks Creative Group.

Axelrod says these contributors have gone a very long way in helping grow the program and educating thousands of students across the Vancouver School District. Operating since 2004, Axelrod estimates that by the end of this school year, the Scientist in Residence Program will have engaged 2700 K-7 students in 37 elementary schools across Vancouver.