Launched publicly on February 1, 2003, the Agents of Change initiative has transformed more than 30 percent of the Ontario Science Centre’s public spaces with a new approach for visitor engagement and experiences to stimulate visitors to think differently about themselves and their world. Propelled by a fundraising effort that raised $47.5 million, the initiative moved beyond the Science Centre to create new hubs of activity off-site and online, encouraging questions and sparking the development of problem-solving skills needed to address the issues of the 21st century.

Through Agents of Change, the Ontario Science Centre is creating deeper relationships with visitors and cementing its footprint as the place where Canada’s future scientists and innovators are inspired and take action.

An agency of the Government of Ontario
The $47.5 million Agents of Change initiative was the greatest leap forward for the Ontario Science Centre since it opened in 1969. Agents of Change revitalized more than 30 percent of our public spaces, created hubs of interactivity online and off-site, and pioneered a new approach to visitor engagement for science centres worldwide. Agents of Change was critical to our success.

The Science Centre has realized a remarkable physical and philosophical transformation. We now see and do things differently, and we’re inspiring our visitors and contemporaries to do the same.

We are engaging a new generation of innovators. Our goal is to become the public centre for innovative thinking, creativity, and collaboration in science and technology.

To our donors, partners and stakeholders, thank you for your endorsement. You are true agents of change. The Ontario Science Centre has impacted more than 40 million visitors since it opened 38 years ago. Thanks to your generous support, we will inspire millions more in the years to come.

Through this commemorative booklet, we hope you will join us in celebrating our accomplishments and anticipating a bright future.

YOUR NEW ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE HAS ARRIVED.

Lesley Lewis, CEO
THE AGENTS OF CHANGE INITIATIVE has reinvented the science centre model for the 21st century. Science centres and science museums have always sought to increase public understanding of science and technology. By going further, by involving visitors directly in the process of science and innovation—tackling real world issues, interacting with leading scientists, engaging in trial-and-error experimentation, and much more—the Ontario Science Centre is sparking curiosity, nurturing innovation skills and growing the next generation of science-confident citizens.

The new Ontario Science Centre provides dynamic experiences and environments where experimentation and failure are vital components of innovative activity, where it’s safe to test ideas and build the confidence to explore them further. Participants become inspired—and inspired to question.

The Ontario Science Centre has a unique role in promoting innovation skills and science literacy in visitors of all ages. On-site experiences added through Agents of Change are designed for specific age groups, and are helping the Science Centre extend its reach beyond its traditional family audiences to include toddlers, teens and adults. Online and off-site experiences take the Science Centre beyond its walls making science and technology more accessible than ever before.

As part of its commitment to the development of a science-literate population, the Science Centre is engaging citizens in considering and responding to science-related issues such as climate change, genetically modified organisms and stem cell research. For example, monthly Café Scientifiques, held off-site at a downtown pub, bring together scientists and citizens to discuss and debate hot topics over a glass of wine or a cup of coffee.

With the support of numerous partners, the Ontario Science Centre is strategically positioned at the intersection of the scientific, cultural, educational and corporate sectors. It has become an agent of change with a major role in developing a population capable of making informed decisions that impact their personal well-being and that of our planet.

ARE YOU AN AGENT OF CHANGE?
Though everyone is welcome, the Weston Family Innovation Centre is purpose-built for 14 to 24 year olds – tomorrow’s future leaders and innovators. Where else can you produce stop-motion films, design footwear, mix music on a wall of sound or solve a challenge of the day? Teen and young adult participants are spending extended periods of time engaged in the Weston Family Innovation Centre experiences, and then continuing their involvement at home online via www.RedShiftNow.ca.

And along with these new levels of creativity comes deeper engagement with breaking news and controversial issues in current science. Daily headlines and HotSpot presentations, changing on-site and online polls and discussion boards propelled by provocative questions, field diaries from researchers around the globe, regular podcasts and online video in emerging social media spaces like YouTube – all drive a new level of dialogue and reach audiences well beyond Toronto, Ontario and Canada.

But how do you instill innovative thinking in a demographic group that has their own ideas of what they want to do? The solution: include these individuals as you develop your plans and work with them to evolve along with their ever-changing interests. Then, carry out ongoing research and evaluation to ensure you are on the right track.

**WESTON FAMILY INNOVATION CENTRE**

Science Centre teams pilot tested more than 600 concepts with over 18,000 youth participants before deciding on the 50+ dynamic experiences now found in the edgy, new Weston Family Innovation Centre – the cornerstone of Agents of Change. It’s a place where music and art co-exist with science and technology; where young minds are free to think up unexpected solutions without worrying about being wrong; where the language used is provocative and tailored to youth.

The Ontario Science Centre challenged itself to find ways to inspire teens and young adults to be innovative – to question everything, take risks and share ideas.
The welcoming face of the new Ontario Science Centre invites visitors to explore the diverse features of their surroundings and to look beyond the obvious. This green expansive outdoor exploration plaza highlights the juxtaposition of the Science Centre between the natural setting of the Don Valley and the urban community of Flemingdon Park.

TELUSCAPE

By enhancing and blending with the landscape, TELUSCAPE experiences provide imaginative ways for visitors to delight in science and nature. Indigenous plantings and a wetland are combined with meandering walkways, water features, sculptural elements, and FuNtain, a spectacular interactive musical art installation. Public programs held in the outdoor Forum make TELUSCAPE come alive.

Available 24/7, free of charge, TELUSCAPE welcomes neighbours who come for the local farmers market, after-school outings or simply to spend time with family and friends in a green space. It has become an oasis for the densely populated neighbourhood and forges even stronger ties between the Science Centre and the local community.

TELUSCAPE promotes a new model of engagement with science and the environment and encourages all who visit to “think outside.”
“Wow! Was I ever wrong about the Science Centre not being appropriate for younger children... It (KidSpark) was as if the space was made for them... I had a hard time trying to pry them away...”

– Jennifer, Parent

“Awesome”
“Never knew science was so fun...”

– Blake, age 13

“Making an Impact”

The Weston Family Innovation Centre empowers guests to do things, be curious, try things out... it is a decided departure from the usual science centre exhibition or activity area in that it does not lead the guests to a desired conclusion but rather empowers them to do what comes naturally – be curious and try things out their own way.”

– Robert MacWest, The Informal Learning Review - No. 82

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“The Ontario Science Centre really is an inspiring place and I really admire your collective vision. I know you aren’t allowed to say it, but I will say that I do think you have come up with both the vision for the future version of science centres and some of the strategies to implement it. Very impressive!”

– Alan I. Leshner, CEO and Executive Publisher, Science American Association for the Advancement of Science

Since 2003...

Annual attendance benchmark has grown from 1 million to more than 1.2 million visitors
School visits have increased from 200,000 to over 240,000 per year
The ranks of Science Centre members have swelled from 42,000 to more than 80,000 individuals
Online visits to Science Centre web sites this year will top 4 million – a fourfold increase
At the heart of both science and art is inspiration, that special sense of awe and wonder that greets us at the threshold of discovery.

A central theme in the new Ontario Science Centre is an ongoing exploration of the connections between art, technology and science. Three major art installations, selected through a juried international competition, are now a fundamental component of every visit. These installations encourage visitors to see things differently.

Cloud, by renowned Canadian artist David Rokeby, is a kinetic artwork that represents the complexity of the stages of change in the world around us, from solid to liquid to gas. This installation melds the scientific and the organic and visitors are drawn to re-examine their own reality. Lotic Meander is Stacy Levy’s sculpture representing a meandering river. Visitors walking on the 91 metre-long carved pathway will feel the pattern of ebbs and flows through the soles of their feet and experience a visceral sense of local Ontario waterways and the beauty of water currents. FUNtain, created by Toronto artist Steve Mann, is an outdoor interactive water-fountain sculpture incorporating sound and water with form, function and a sense of frolic.

In addition to these major installations, visitors now participate in constantly evolving programs and presentations focused on exploring the links between art and science. Rotating exhibitions by youth artists, both local and from around the world, are displayed in a dedicated new gallery space in the Weston Family Innovation Centre.
This energetic space offers a portal to the exciting world of science and is geared to young children – from toddlers to eight-year-olds – their parents and caregivers. It encourages exploration, ignites curiosity and imagination, builds self-confidence and nourishes life-enhancing innovation skills – all in a lively and supportive environment.

At KidSpark, the first experience area of Agents of Change to launch, young visitors embark on a wondrous voyage to discover their inner scientist. What was originally viewed as a physical space for learning through play has also become a place where early childhood education interns develop and hone their skills, as well as a venue for conducting university-level science research related to early learning. Parent and tot programs, primary level school programs and early childhood education research combine to create a rich environment that supports our youngest visitors. These programs, held in two new primary workshops, spark the ability to observe, experiment and find answers to questions. Children are given vital building blocks for lifelong learning while parents gain insights into how their children learn.

As KidSpark’s kids mature into adults, a thirst for knowledge will be passed on to their own children, and the Ontario Science Centre will continue to provide inspiration for future generations.
THE FOLLOWING DONORS AND PARTNERS have enabled the Ontario Science Centre’s Agents of Change transformation. We are very grateful for their commitment to helping shape the next generation of Canadian innovators.

$15,000,000+

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation
Government of Ontario

$10,000,000

TELUS
DuPont Canada
Department of Canadian Heritage

$100,000 – $999,999

BMO Financial Group
CIBC
The Frum Foundation
The Globe and Mail
Imperial Oil Foundation
The Henry White Kinnear Foundation
The Gail and David O’Brien Family
Ontario Early Years Challenge Fund
Procter & Gamble Inc.
RBC Foundation
ScotiaBank Group
TD Bank Financial Group

$10,000 – $99,999

Bell Canada
Nancy Birnbaum and Rod Skelton
The Canavan Family Foundation
Mark and Suzanne Cohen
Gap Foundation
Roy T. Graydon
Hal Jackman Foundation
John and Anne MacDonald
Maritz Canada Inc.
MDA
Dr. Robert G. Miller
Howard Sokolowski and Linda Frum
Sono of Canada Ltd.

Up to $9,999

John E. Abele
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Bennet/Rathbone Family
Robert Chant
The Ken Chisholm Memorial Fund
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Errol D’Costa
Diamante Developments
Dosario Landscaping Services Inc.
Jonathan Goodman
Maggie and Bern Gorecki
Rosemary Hall
Bennie and Hart Hillman
Peter Irwin
Teri A. Kirk
Lesley Lewis and Marvin Strach
Marilyn Linton
Robert J. Macdonald
The John McKellar Charitable Foundation
Suzanne and David McQueen
Cameran Mirza
Peggy Mulligan
Paisley/Miller Family
Helene Pasen
Shoppers Drug Mart
G. Wayne Squibb
Torstar
The Troop Family
Sam Zuk
Anonymous (2)
SEPTEMBER 1999 – The Ontario Science Centre considers the role of a science centre in the 21st century and develops a proposal for a major project to build a culture of innovation in Ontario.

MAY 2000 – Ontario Government announces $10 million contribution to the Science Centre to be matched in private support for a project focused on innovation and youth. Agents of Change project budget set at $30 million.

SPRING 2000 – Completed fundraising feasibility study.

SEPTEMBER 2000 – First corporate commitment made by DuPont Canada: $1 million to become the Agents of Change “Knowledge Partner.”

SUMMER 2001 – Begin broad consultation with “innovators” in research, corporate and education sectors to inform project development. Ongoing consultation with youth and youth organizations.

SPRING 2001 – Experience Conceptual Plan completed by Ontario Science Centre team.

SUMMER 2001 – Fall 2001 – Architectural Master Plan completed.

DECEMBER 2001 – Project budget confirmed at $40 million.

MARCH 2002 – Project budget confirmed at $40 million.

SPRING 2002 – Project launch.

FEBRUARY 2003 – Public launch of $6 million Agents of Change initiative, announcement of Weston Foundation and DuPont gifts.

JUNE 2004 – KidSpark wins national “Best New Exhibition” Award from Canadian Association of Science Centres.

SEPTEMBER 2004 – Science Centre celebrates 45th anniversary.

MARCH 2005 – First phase of the Weston Family Innovation Centre (Hot Zone) opens featuring changing current science content.


APRIL 2005 – $10 million commitment from TELUS brings Agents of Change fundraising over the top – $47.5 million raised. Increased funding enables creation of TELUSCAPE exploration plaza.

SEPTEMBER 2006 – TELUSCAPE opens, including FUNtaine.

JUNE 2007 – The Weston Family Innovation Centre wins national “Best New Exhibition” Award from Canadian Association of Science Centres.

JUNE 2007 – Agents of Change transformation officially complete, celebrated with first annual Innovators’ Ball fundraising gala.

FEBRUARY 2006 – Welcomed 40 millionth visitor since opening in 1969.

FEBRUARY 2006 – Completed Weston Family Innovation Centre opens.

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MARCH 2007 – Artworks Cloud and Lotic Meander unveiled.


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NOVEMBER 2002 – KidSpark and new primary workshops open to the public. Within three months Science Centre memberships increase 33%.

APRIL 2003 – Construction begins.

JULY 2003 – MacDonald-Hart & Associates Ltd. hired as project manager to lead and coordinate all aspects of the transformation.

DECEMBER 2004 – Due to overwhelming response, an expanded KidSpark opens (twice its original size).

MARCH 2005 – Finalists for international juried “Grand Central” art competition announced.

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www.OntarioScienceCentre.ca
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