

THE LEACOCK FOUNDATION

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# IGNITING POTENTIAL

**2018** *Annual Report*



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## WHO WE ARE

The most challenging issue of our time is the growing inequality of wealth both locally and globally. At the Leacock Foundation we strive to address this inequity by providing children who are born into challenging economic circumstances with access to a fully-subsidized platform of literacy and leadership programs designed to help them overcome barriers, unlock their potential and contribute to their communities. At the core of our work is the belief that all children, regardless of circumstances, are born with potential. By igniting and accelerating potential we are able to close the opportunity gap faced by low income communities and provide a bridge to academic and personal success.

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## WHERE WE WORK

### Toronto

In Toronto, programs are offered in collaboration with partner schools in several high-needs communities including St. James Town, Keele - Finch, Woburn, Scarborough and the First Nations School of Toronto. We have mutually beneficial partnerships with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Future Design School, Rotman School of Management, OISE, Branksome Hall, and Greenwood College.

### South Africa

In South Africa, we work with the Get Ahead Schools' trio of low-fee independent schools in Queenstown — a rural community in the Eastern Cape near Nelson Mandela's birthplace. Our donors support these schools through infrastructure, technology updates, teacher development and student-leadership programs.



# A MESSAGE FROM PETER OLIVER

*President & Founder*



Dear friends,

Thank you once again for supporting our work, and for believing in our mission and vision. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we continue to offer children in our target communities in Toronto and South Africa access to the academic support and educational resources they will need to thrive in our rapidly changing world. Arguably the most serious issue of our time is the growing inequality of wealth. Even more serious in my

opinion is the inequality of opportunity. Inequality of opportunity leads to hopelessness and when you have no hope of a brighter future, you are no longer a positive contributor to your community or your country. The Leacock Foundation is focused on helping those who need a helping hand to realize their potential.

This is the heart of the matter — The Leacock Foundation is not about handouts, it's about a hand *up*. It's about creating a level playing field, it's about bridging an opportunity gap. As a result of our work, children learn how to succeed in group settings, how to ask questions, how the world looks beyond their neighborhood, what they might want to be, or do when they grow up, how to make and keep friends, how to give back and how to advocate for themselves and their parents. These are not small matters — each experience builds character and resiliency, which helps to shape young leaders, ready to contribute to the world in positive ways.

I hope you enjoy reading the articles enclosed in this report as they paint a picture of what is possible when potential is ignited in children, in teachers, in mentors and in communities. **Thank you for your commitment to the Leacock Foundation, together we are making a difference.**

Peter Oliver



# & KRISTINE GASTON

*Executive Director*



Dear supporters,

When I look back on 2018 I am so excited by the foundation of excellence we have built across all of our programs in Toronto and South Africa. Both locally and globally we have strived to offer the children we serve the best possible academic experience along with enriching activities and opportunities to ignite their passion for learning and leadership.

Over the past five years I have thought a lot about what makes our programs special, and it has become clear to me that it is not a magic bullet, or a single experience that can change a child's life. It is the product of many touch points, delivered consistently over time, by supportive educators and outstanding mentors.

In South Africa, our teaching community is passionate about helping a new generation of South Africans reach their potential, and in Toronto our teaching partners are dedicated to bridging the opportunity gap faced by underserved communities. The fact that we are able to sustain this support over weeks, months, and years is what makes a lasting impression on a child's life.

We wouldn't be able to offer our programs without you and your support. Thank you for trusting us with your donation. We are committed to making sure each and every dollar is well spent in the service of making a child's life better each and every day.

On behalf of all of us at the Leacock office; Jessica, Nicola, Stefania and Patricia, **I want to thank you for the difference you are making.**

Kristine Gaston

A handwritten signature of Kristine Gaston in black ink, featuring a stylized 'K' and a long, flowing line.



# FUNDING THE FUTURE

## Key Grants Supporting Our Work

As a result of financial support from a number of granting bodies in 2018, the Leacock Foundation was able to expand and deepen our work in both Toronto and South Africa. We wanted to share a few of the projects that were completed or started in 2018. To these generous donors — thank you! You helped us achieve so many exciting milestones with your funding!

### Get Ahead PATHS (Purposeful Action Towards Helping Students)

With Financial support from the Unifor Social Justice Fund we are launching the PATHS Program at Get Ahead in July of 2019. This innovative program was born out of the desire to ensure that Get Ahead graduates are learning how to utilize their education to the fullest and to assist them in creating pathways to meaningful success post-matric through a comprehensive and sustainable guidance program. The centerpiece is a peer-to mentorship program whereby Get Ahead's high-achieving students under the direction of the Guidance Councilor will enrich the Get Ahead environment and be mandated the responsibility of growing a culture of social justice and purposeful action.

### Peter Gilgan Foundation – Take the Lead Community Action Club

We were thrilled to receive financial support from the Peter Gilgan Foundation to continue to offer our signature leadership

program, Take the LEAD, in our target communities across the GTA. The program runs from October to May with students meeting twice weekly. Throughout the program Grade 7 & 8 students learn how to identify an issue in their community, create a solution, present their ideas, and then take action. For example, one group wanted to tackle the issue of littering and its impact on the environment. The group approached Councilor Jennifer McKelvie, as they noted her interest in this area. In order to raise monies for Toronto Parks & Recreation, the young ladies held a bake sale for 3 days during lunch time. They raised \$162 and presented the cheque to Councilor McKelvie during their City Hall visit. Mayor Tory left them an autographed book for their school library.

### Robert Kerr Foundation – Programs in Toronto

In 2018 the Robert Kerr Foundation provided funding to sustain our literacy programs across the GTA, specifically to support our mission to help marginalized and at-risk youth through education and mentorship. The funding allowed us to investigate the viability of adding an early-year's component to our literacy programs and we are excited that in the summer of 2019 we will be adding a kindergarten class to our LEAP into Literacy programs.

### Nicola Wealth – March Break Math Madness – Toronto

As a needs-based organization, we pride ourselves on listening to our school partners to learn how the needs of students are changing each year. Through these conversations we identified a

need to focus on math literacy while at the same time alleviating student anxiety about math. We were so fortunate to receive funding from Nicola Wealth to pilot our first March Break Math Madness camp in two locations in Toronto! Students spent a week having fun with math, developing new skills and strategies, and learning how math is a part of everyday life! We can't wait to expand this program to all three communities in 2019!





# CULTIVATING POTENTIAL

## Toronto Teachers Share Their Perspective on Leacock Programs

### Allister Geonanga – St. James Town

For the past 8 years, Allister Geonanga has worked as a teacher at Hawthorne II Bilingual Alternative. He joined the Leacock Foundation team in October as a Saturday Morning Literacy Club teacher and as the Director/Teacher of March Break Math Madness. His work for both programs is focused on giving children equitable opportunities for academic achievement and support for their overall wellbeing.

Small class size, high volunteer involvement, high student engagement, and positive relationships were just a few of the ways Allister thinks Leacock programs are special. He added, “Smaller classes make for a more equitable fun environment. Right now we are doing Ted Talks with my students. One student is talking about racism, another student is talking about stereotypes... everyone is learning!”

In the future Allister hopes to see more real-world learning through field trips and expert visits to help bridge the opportunity gap for children who don't leave their neighborhood. He also hopes to empower students to become 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners by integrating global issues into his teaching.

### Samantha Forbes – Woburn

Whether you pay a visit on a Saturday morning or during March Break, you are bound to observe Mrs. Samantha Forbes' students surrounding her as she delivers her engaging lessons. As fairly new to the teaching profession, Forbes shared, “It has increased my confidence and made me grow as an educator. Working with small groups is beneficial both for myself and the children. It has given me a chance to differentiate, communicate, plan and explore new ways to learn with my students.”

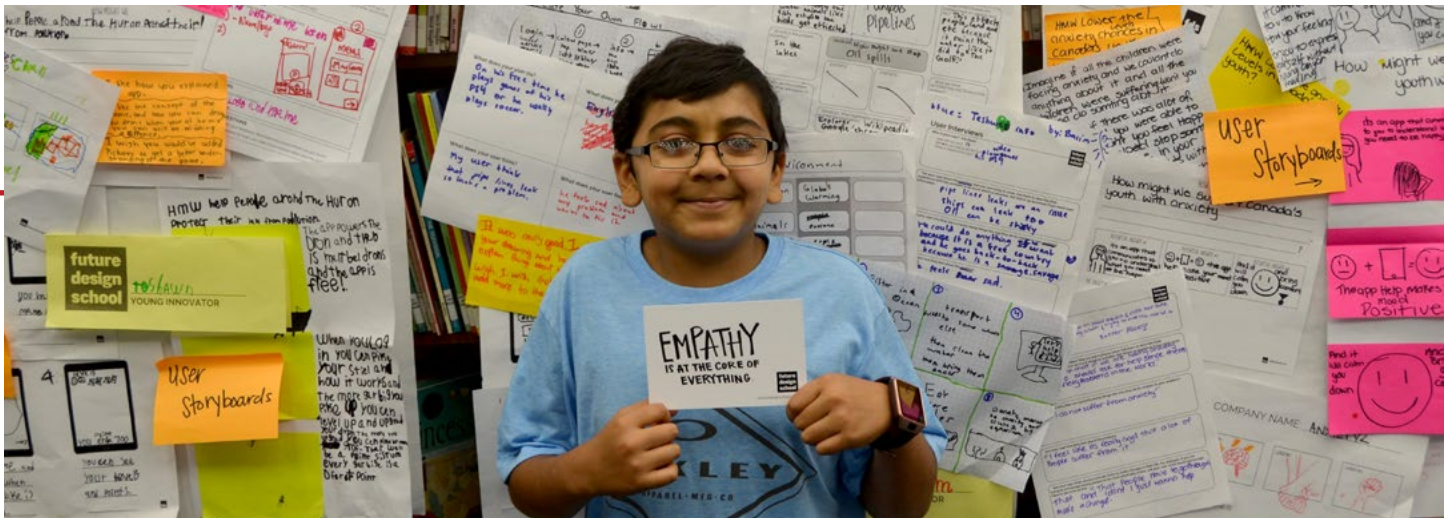
In a matter of 7 months, Forbes has already witnessed the positive impact the Leacock Foundation has on the students. “The kids have become more comfortable with both their peers and myself as a result of the smaller groups. They are willing to take more academic risks and attempt questions. Their confidence has increased. Their self-esteem has grown — I had students who wouldn't originally read out loud who now volunteer to read at story time!”

Some final words of wisdom to the participants of our Leacock Programs, “...Be positive and kind individuals and keep reading and writing. Dream big and work hard!”

**“...It has increased my confidence  
and made me grow as an educator.”**

*– Mrs. Samantha Forbes, Toronto Teacher, on the benefits of  
small class sizes*





Allister Geonanga



Samantha Forbes



# A PASSION FOR LEARNING

## Toronto Students Share Their Experience in the Classroom

Positive experiences create a culture of learning and fun! Aarav Patel, Grade 5 student, and Tamilaruvi Kularajasingam, Grade 6 student, are students at the Saturday Morning Literacy Club.

Aarav has participated in LEAP into Literacy Summer Camp, Saturday Morning Literacy Club and March Break Math Madness. He returns because it is a fun experience, and a good way to spend the breaks from school. He has not only improved his literacy such as retelling and inferring skills but also learned exercises to stay fit. One of his favourite moments of March Break Math Madness was the daily riddles.

In his ideal Leacock Foundation experience, he would love to see more of everything — book celebrations, workshops, field trips and even longer sessions. In the meantime, he described his Leacock experience as a friendly place to make new friends and be open to learning new things.

Tamilaruvi has also participated in an array of Leacock Foundation programs. Her participation has been beneficial as she's able to teach her younger sisters. She's become a better writer and mathematician as she was taught step by step on what to do to improve literacy and math skills. She said, "I learned how to do mental math, how important protecting our environment is, how to communicate better, how to work with others, and how to

collaborate." Two of her most memorable moments are canoeing in the overnight camp and the individualized support in Saturday Morning Literacy Club.



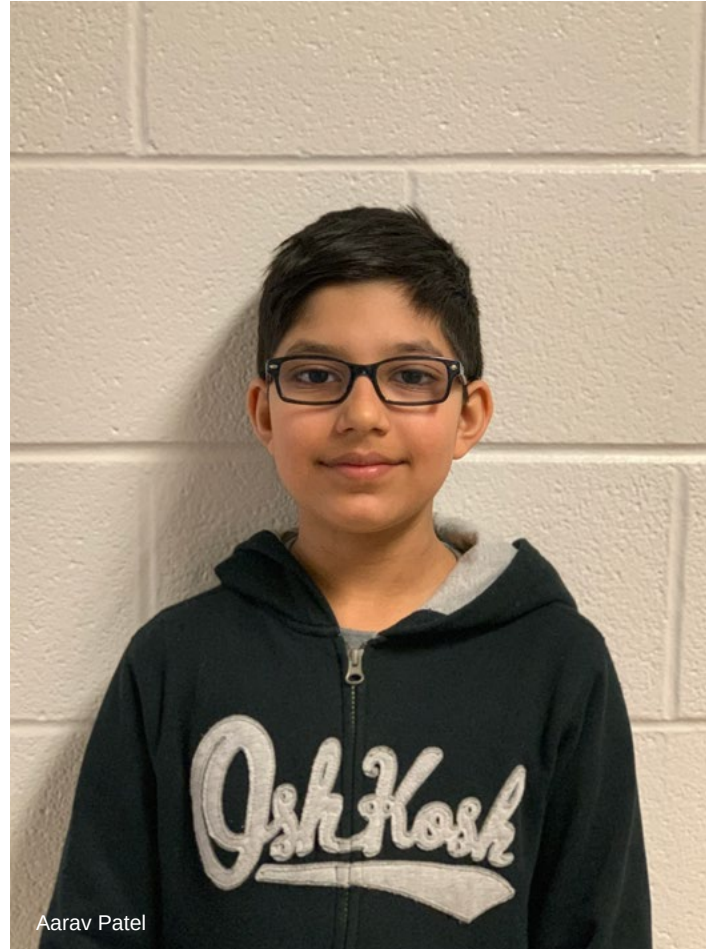




Tamilaruvi  
Kularajasingam

“I learned how to do mental math,  
how important protecting our  
environment is, how to communicate  
better, how to work with others,  
and how to collaborate.”

– Tamilaruvi Kularajasingam, Grade 6 student  
at the Saturday Morning Literacy Club



Aarav Patel



# MENTORSHIP THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

## Volunteerism in Toronto

Srijan Agrawal, Director of Regulatory Strategy and Engagement at RBC Capital Markets, was introduced to the work of the Leacock Foundation and having volunteered internationally in South Africa, he immediately connected with the local/global focus of the organization's mission. Through his employer, RBC, Srijan was able to reach out to fellow employees and organize a volunteer day which benefited the Foundation with both manpower and financial support. The RBC Employee Volunteer Grant, empowers employees to volunteer their time, expertise and resources for different projects in their communities.

Srijan and his team joined the students at Rose Avenue P.S. for Saturday Morning Literacy Club. He shares, "I was impressed that the program offered recreation, literacy instruction and tech skills, and that through each stage the students were engaged and responsive. I was also really impressed that the kids took ownership of their learning, they wanted to be a part of the program, and they were having a good time."

When asked about the impact volunteering at the program had on him, Srijan shared "I was 13 years old when I came to Canada, and the first years of adjustment were hard on my entire family. We persevered and were successful because the people we met were helpful, and supported our journey. My family and I worked hard, but it made a huge difference to feel welcomed and encouraged. I see myself in the kids at Rose

Avenue, and I think it helps them to see that, even if it is challenging right now, they too can be successful in the future. I want to be a role model, particularly for the young boys and be someone they can look up to."

Srijan plans on continuing to volunteer and is working on developing a volunteer day of activities in the summer of 2019 in which he and his fellow RBC employees can share their diverse skills and experience with the Rose Avenue community.



Srijan Agrawal



# VISIONARY LEADERSHIP



## Pieter Steyn, Principal at Get Ahead College and His Vision for the Future

"I started in the position as Head of Get Ahead College in January 2018. The biggest professional impact on me, through my involvement at Get Ahead College, has been to engage more deeply into the critical question of what actually works in schools to improve learning. Informed by evidence-based research, I am now more persuaded (particularly through the work of Professor John Hattie) that it is not necessarily the physical environment, but the way I, as a school leader, and my teachers think, that has the biggest impact on teaching and learning. I have made it a priority to increasingly focus on helping teachers to change their mind frames from "the problem lies with the students" to "how can my contribution make a more positive difference in the way students learn?"

"Get Ahead College is a truly special place. Many of the students come from difficult family backgrounds and impoverished communities, however, there is unbelievable human potential in the school community and staff and students are committed to fulfill this potential. Teachers go the extra mile for their students and support them through good and bad times. Students love the school, particularly the fact that Get Ahead provides a firm but loving environment that keeps them "on the straight and narrow," whilst also catering to their academic ambitions and allowing them opportunities to express their artistic, sporting or entrepreneurial talents.

"In the future I would like to see a learning community striving for excellence and creating resilient young South Africans who have integrity, a thirst for knowledge and superb work ethic. Get Ahead would be a beacon of light producing progressive, intelligent critical thinkers ready to contribute to society and fully capable of becoming leaders in different contexts."

When asked to share some words of wisdom to today's and tomorrow's students, Mr. Steyn shares "Always do more and expect more from yourself, than what you think is enough. Never give up, no matter how tough. Have a vision of yourself being successful and valuable wherever you go."



Pieter Steyn  
and students



# UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

## Get Ahead Students With A Passion for Learning

### Khanya Mashiya

"I am currently doing Grade 11 and I have been in Get Ahead since Grade 8. I have never repeated a grade. Get Ahead has done a lot for me. At Get Ahead everyone is treated with respect, and the rules exist so that everyone can be their best. I have grown. I can now do things differently. In life, not everything will be given to you — you have to get up and work hard. I have learnt that from Get Ahead! I really enjoy the Saturday ISP classes (extra lessons in CAT) and a big highlight for me was when I won first place in Public Speaking.

In the future I would like to see more and more students being afforded the opportunity that I have been given. My words of advice to future students would be to understand that Get Ahead can only take you up until a certain point. The rest is up to you. All that matters is your dedication and never say die attitude."



**"In the future I would like to see more and more students being afforded the opportunity that I have been given."**

*– Khanya Mashiya, Grade 11 Student in Get Ahead*

### Mihle Bongweni

"I am currently in Grade 10 at Get Ahead College. I have been a student at Get Ahead College for four months, and two years previously at Whittlesea Get Ahead Project. Get Ahead has had such a positive impact on me. The school has taught me the importance of giving, and to focus less on getting. I've also learnt a lot through STEAM. All this has shown me that working hard rewards greatly.

A highlight of my time at Get Ahead is the educational excursion we went on about two years ago, to the Science and Technology Centre in Grahamstown. It was my first school trip and it taught me so much. I loved it. What makes Get Ahead unique is the ability to give what's needed, but never asked for. What we receive as students is not found in other schools. In the future, I would like to see the school grow. To have advanced technology teaching, offering a wide variety of sports, a big building with other facilities like a library, science labs, multi-functional hall, art rooms and so forth. I want Get Ahead to be recognized as an ideal school — the best of its kind.

If I could pass on advice to my fellow students it would be to be grateful of where we've been put, because not everyone gets that privilege, and secondly that we need to be able to share the advantage that we receive from the school — big or small — because in that way, we'll become mighty trees of tomorrow."



**"What makes Get Ahead unique is the ability to give what's needed, but never asked for."**

*– Mihle Bongweni, Grade 10 Student in Get Ahead*



# EDUCATION WITH IMPACT

## STEAM and How It's Creating Tomorrow's Thought Leaders

Get Ahead wants to give students the best possible grounding and headstart in Maths and Science. This starts at a young age where playful learning and discovery are encouraged.

Students from as young as four years old will be exposed to, and have their interests sparked in, STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths). Exposure at such an early age demystifies the misconception that Maths and Science are elite and difficult subjects.

These spaces empower students, encouraging a shift from being passive consumers of knowledge and information to active creators and innovators. Makerspaces offer authentic learning experiences connected to the real world, engaging students in the 'big picture.' The focus is not necessarily on the end product, but on the process involved during the design and construction phases.

## What the Staff of Get Ahead Say

"I think that the programme is very beneficial towards the children's growth and development. I do see the impact that the Makerspace has on the kids. I think it's wonderful!"

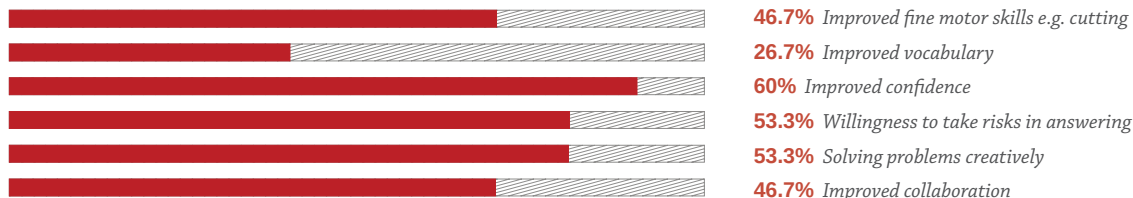
"The children enjoy it and they are certainly learning different skills from it."

"As we all know, it makes the lessons more fun so the kids remember what they learned."

"The Makerspace is an AMAZING inspiration to the learners!"

"I think it is a wonderful space where kids can just be kids and explore things which are not set out in the curriculum. I feel that this opportunity will awaken some sort of interest that could lead them to what they want to become one day."

## Benefits of Makerspace





### What the Learners of Get Ahead Say

"I like that they let us research when we need to research something, and I'm thankful about the books that they let us read and take home with us."

"I like design with computers and programmes."

"Reading and being able to experiment with things and computers."

"What I most enjoy is to learn new things and have my own time to think and play."

"Learning to be patient."



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# FINANCIAL REPORT

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Revenue	\$
<i>Memberships and donations</i>	668,388
<i>Fundraising activities, special events and other</i>	366,058
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>1,034,446</b>
<i>Direct fundraising, special event and marketing expenses</i>	-151,742
<b>Net revenue</b>	<b>882,704</b>

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Expenses	\$
<i>Program support funding: South Africa programs</i>	444,870
<i>Program support funding: Toronto programs</i>	550,836
<i>Marketing and indirect fundraising expenses</i>	11,152
<i>General administration</i>	114,509
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,121,367</b>
<i>Shortfall</i>	-238,663
<i>Fund balance at beginning of year</i>	461,162
<b>Fund balance at end of year</b>	<b>222,499</b>



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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **Chairman**

Mark Damelin

### **President**

Peter Oliver

### **Directors**

Lee Chung

Wendy Dobson

William Jones

Judy MacLellan

Dan McAlister

Joanne Pickard

Timothy Price

Chad Royer

Joe Sheehan

Karrie Weinstock

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## HOW TO SUPPORT

### **Be the Spark That Ignites Potential In A Child's Life**

#### **Make A Multi-Year Pledge**

Committing a series of gifts over a number of years offers you the recognition of a large pledge, managed over time. By combining yearly gifts into a multi-year pledge, donors have a greater impact on Leacock programming by allowing us to make longer-term plans based on program sustainability.

#### **Make A One Time Gift**

With this option you may direct a donation towards a specific program or area of need. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a positive impact on the youth involved in our programs. You are helping to ignite the potential of each and every child involved in our literacy and leadership programs.

#### **Become A Leacock Member**

The success of the Leacock Foundation is a result of the strength of its passionate and committed members. With a minimum \$1,000 annual donation you receive the benefits of membership including a ticket to the annual Leacock Debate and invitations to other Leacock events.



# THE LEACOCK FOUNDATION

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## *Our Partners & Sponsors*



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 The Leacock Foundation

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