



LAUNCH introduces new program to make STEAM the next sport for kids

LAUNCH's 10-week STEAM program for children brings the best of minor sports to science and technology programming.

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Minor sports like hockey or dance, basketball or gymnastics help children build important social skills, self confidence, and foundations for lifelong friendships. [LAUNCH Waterloo](#) is bringing the benefits of sport to science, technology, engineering, art and math programming through a new STEAM league with support from corporate sponsors.

"Sport plays a huge role in many children's lives," says Tobi Day-Hamilton, co-founder of LAUNCH. "Teamwork, friendships, work ethic and more are shaped by participation in team sports. We saw an opportunity to bring all those good things to STEAM programming and inspire more kids to see the fun in science, engineering, art and math."

LAUNCH Waterloo's new program features small teams of children meeting each week with coaches for fun STEAM activities. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LAUNCH STEAM League will be offered online and by going virtual, has the potential to reach students across the country. LAUNCH's online summer program welcomed children from Waterloo Region as well as the Greater Toronto Area. By continuing online, LAUNCH aims to expand its reach, bring more recreational programming to kids, and ensure all children can participate.

"We've been working closely with LAUNCH on their work in the Waterloo region to support STEAM learning, and we're excited they're expanding their programs to learners across the country," said Steve Woods, Google Canada Engineering and Waterloo Site Lead. "Similar to other sports, the LAUNCH STEAM League will allow students to work together to advance a shared goal, as they build teamwork and problem solving skills. These are pivotal skills that will help them not only for future projects, but also when they enter the workforce."

To continue to support the local community, LAUNCH has partnered with House of Friendship and Carizon to reach children and families across Waterloo Region and bring STEAM programming to children who might not have this opportunity.

"Our goal at House of Friendship is to change the odds for kids," says Asha Pillar, Community Program Manager at House of Friendship. "Through our partnership with Launch and Carizon, and with the support of corporate sponsors, we can extend STEAM learning opportunities to even more communities in Waterloo Region."

Similar to a minor sports league, the 10-week program includes science and technology activities and practices, team-based learning and an end-of-season tournament. The program is designed in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Science Centre and is supported by HIP Developments, Google and the Bosch Community Fund.

"Carizon is committed to providing opportunities that inspire hope for families in our community," says Debbie Engel, Director Community Services at Carizon. "Our partnership with LAUNCH allows children and youth experiences that otherwise might not be available to them."

The first full season of the LAUNCH STEAM League begins October 5th for children in grades 4 through 8 and runs until December 11. Register online at www.launchwaterloo.ca.

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About LAUNCH Waterloo

LAUNCH Waterloo is a social enterprise with a bold vision: to inspire kids to be creative and ethical critical thinkers that embrace their own curiosity and imagination. To achieve our vision, we are transforming traditional STEAM programming from one-day or one-week touchpoints to long-term, progressive, fun recreational programs. Adopting a minor sports framework, LAUNCH hosts seasons of science, technology, engineering, arts and math programs for children.

Media Contacts

Tobi Day-Hamilton
Co-founder, LAUNCH Waterloo
P: 519-590-3551
E: tobi@launchwaterloo.ca