



IMPACT REPORT

Celebrating, informing and inspiring scientific excellence around the globe since 1957.

gairdner
LES PRIX CANADA GAIRDNER AWARDS

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This report covers the period between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.





Janet Rossant

President and Scientific Director,
Gairdner Foundation

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

2025 was another exceptional year for the Gairdner Foundation.

At the heart of our work is a simple purpose: to celebrate the very best science — and the scientists whose discoveries improve lives around the world. Through the Canada Gairdner Awards, we recognize excellence at the highest international level, while ensuring that these achievements continue to strengthen Canada’s scientific future.

This year, Gairdner laureates engaged directly with more than 6,000 students, educators, and researchers across Canada and beyond — bringing world-leading discovery into classrooms, campuses, and communities. These moments of connection, where extraordinary science meets curiosity, allow students the space to see themselves in the future of discovery and reinforce Canada’s role as a global leader in research and innovation.

From inspiring the next generation to honouring transformative discovery, everything Gairdner does is intentionally connected, ensuring scientific excellence in Canada is not only celebrated, but sustained.

ABOUT THE GAIRDNER FOUNDATION

Established in 1957 by Canadian philanthropist, James Gairdner, the Gairdner Foundation is dedicated to recognizing outstanding scientific research that advances the treatment of disease and alleviates human suffering. Through the internationally renowned Canada Gairdner Awards, the Foundation celebrates world-leading discoveries that have transformed modern medicine and improved lives around the globe.

Gairdner also connects science to people. By convening students, researchers, policymakers and the public, the Foundation strengthens the pipeline that drives Canadian discovery and global impact. Through dialogue, outreach and education, Gairdner fosters an informed society and inspires the next generation of scientific innovators to take on the challenges that face the world today.

BY THE NUMBERS

434

Awards presented since 1957

40

Countries represented among awardees

103

Gairdner Award laureates have gone on to win the Nobel Prize

OUR AWARDS

Canada Gairdner International Award

Awarded annually to scientists whose original discoveries have fundamentally advanced understanding of human biology and disease.

John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award

Honours scientific contributions that have led to measurable improvements in health outcomes for populations facing the greatest burden of disease — particularly in low-resource and humanitarian settings.

Peter Gilgan Canada Gairdner Momentum Award

Recognizes exceptional mid-career researchers working in health-related research in Canada, providing national visibility at a critical stage and reinforcing Canada as a place where scientific careers can thrive.



Thanks to the generosity of the Peter Gilgan Foundation, the value of the Momentum Awards has increased — amplifying national recognition and accelerating the impact of Canada's emerging scientific leaders.

GAIRDNER CONNECTS

Inspiring the next generation

In 2025, the Gairdner Foundation launched Gairdner Connects, our national outreach and education program connecting students with world-leading researchers and transformative science.

Delivered through both in-person and digital programming, Gairdner Connects brings discovery into classrooms, lecture halls, and community spaces — creating opportunities for dialogue, mentorship, and inspiration across Canada and beyond.



With the support of Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Gairdner Connects expanded access to student-centered science programming nationwide, helping thousands of learners engage directly with world-leading researchers and explore pathways into scientific careers.

Vancouver, October 2025

2025 Gairdner laureate, Paul Negulescu delivering a speech at the University of British Columbia



Saskatchewan, May 2025

2016 Gairdner laureate, Emmanuelle Charpentier presenting at the University of Saskatchewan



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

6,000+ learners reached

High school students, postsecondary learners, educators, and early-career researchers engaged through in-person and virtual programming

20+ academic, community, and youth-serving partners

Programs delivered across Canada, with virtual events reaching classrooms worldwide

Designed to center student voice and engagement

Programming formats included public and academic lectures, mentorship panels, networking sessions, and moderated discussions

Quebec City, October 2025

2020 Gairdner laureate, Guy Rouleau presenting at Université Laval





I got to meet people who have made such large contributions and will stay with me as inspiration. It was also great to connect my knowledge from my science courses seeing how their application makes real life difference, also cool to see how years of work by researchers makes this knowledge available to us!

— **Grade 11 student**
Gairdner Connects programming



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Increased interest in

STEM



80%

STEM careers



60%



4.45 Rating

Overall attendee experience

4.25 Rating

Feeling welcomed and included

EXTENDING ACCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025, Gairdner Connects extended its reach through virtual programming, open-access educational resources, and strategic partnerships — ensuring students and classrooms could engage with world-leading science regardless of geography.



Gairdner Connects Digital Resource Hub Launched

2025 Gairdner Award Winners Roundtable

The first-ever Gairdner Award Winners Roundtable series brought all eight 2025 Canada Gairdner Award laureates together in a youth-focused virtual format designed specifically for students and classrooms.

2,000+ Students reached nationally
100+ Canadian classrooms joined

2,700+ Additional learners

reached through quizzes, videos, and virtual classroom sessions with Gairdner Award laureates and Early Career Investigators

Student Reviewed Articles

Through a partnership with Frontiers for Young Minds, Gairdner Award winners were featured in student-reviewed, open-access research summaries — extending impact through Frontiers for Young Minds’ global network of youth reviewers. The booklet cover was illustrated by Canadian artist Matthew Billington.



Advancing trust, inclusion, and student voice





Trust Issues: Science, Skepticism & Showing Up, Toronto Metropolitan University

Through collaborations like Trust Issues, a public panel on misinformation and scientific trust, Gairdner featured science communicators and researchers working at the forefront of misinformation studies.

This year, Gairdner also collaborated with student organizations to center student voices through event participation, coverage, and reflection, creating opportunities for students to engage directly with laureates. In November, Gairdner hosted Breaking Barriers in STEM, the Foundation’s first panel to include a student alongside STEM advocacy experts, exploring systemic barriers and diverse perspectives in science.

FROM STUDENTS TO SCIENTIFIC LEADERS

The Gairdner Foundation creates intentional touchpoints along the research journey. These connections form the Gairdner pipeline, and support mentorship, career development and excellence across the research continuum.

The Gairdner Pipeline

- Students
- ICAM Scholars
- Early Career Investigators
- Laureates

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON ACADEMIC MEDICINE (ICAM)

As part of its engagement at ICAM, Gairdner convened a panel featuring Gairdner laureates Zulfiqar Bhutta (2022) and José Belizán (2023). The discussion examined progress and persistent inequities in maternal and child health and formed part of Gairdner’s virtual Global Perspectives Panel series, made possible through the leadership support of TELUS Health, enabling the Foundation to share evidence-based insights with national and international audiences.

Gairdner’s involvement at ICAM is also our opportunity to connect with and support some of the top graduate students in health research in Canada. Gairdner laureates judged the student poster competition and participated in mentorship sessions. The top poster winners were invited to Gairdner Science Week as Gairdner ICAM Scholars to engage directly with laureates and peers.



Being recognized by Gairdner has opened doors to new collaborations and allowed me to tackle bigger questions in neurodegeneration.

Tara Shomali, 2025 Gairdner ICAM Scholar

I think the whole experience was fantastic. As a student I was reinvigorated with a love of science.

Courtney Marshall, 2025 Gairdner ICAM Scholar



Gairdner Science Week Welcome Dinner

EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATORS (ECIs)

Each year, the Gairdner Foundation invites ECIs in their first five years of a full-time research position in Canada to participate in a national competition to present their research during Gairdner Science Week. The year's laureates chose the top ECIs to participate in Gairdner Science Week with curated mentorship, networking, and presentation opportunities alongside their laureate heroes.

This competition places emerging researchers in direct conversation with global scientific leaders—supporting career development, fostering collaboration, and reinforcing Canada's commitment to retaining and advancing the next generation of research talent.



Nika Shakiba
2025 ECI

Assistant Professor,
School of Biomedical
Engineering, University of
British Columbia

Hearing their personal journeys—the challenges they overcame and the persistence that led to their discoveries—reminded me why I fell in love with research in the first place. The experience refueled my commitment to fostering the same spirit of curiosity and collaboration in my own lab and scientific life.

I left with so much hope and optimism for the world and for Canada. For someone who does not work in clinical or bench science, but instead with data and policy, it was even more of an honour to represent the epidemiology and global health spaces on the Gairdner stage.

Prativa Baral
2025 ECI

Assistant Professor,
Department of Global and
Public Health, McGill
University



A woman with curly hair is looking towards a man in a white shirt and safety vest. They are in a laboratory or research setting with various equipment and people in the background.

BUILDING CANADIAN RESEARCH CAPACITY

Gairdner's regional programming brings international science into Canada's research hubs by inviting research communities in Quebec, Alberta, and Ontario to propose symposia that reflect their most pressing scientific priorities. Through provincial calls for proposals, the strongest and most compelling ideas are selected, ensuring each program blends local and international expertise.

Across regions, these symposia convene leading researchers, clinicians, trainees, and partners to exchange ideas, build capacity, and advance discovery. The support of our partners—Fonds de recherche du Québec, the Government of Alberta, and the Krembil Foundation—strengthens regional research ecosystems, sparks critical scientific dialogue, and ensures ideas, talent, and discovery can flourish across Canada.

GAIRDNER SCIENCE WEEK

October 20-24, 2025

Presented by the Krembil Foundation, Gairdner Science Week 2025 was a dynamic, multi-day series of in-person and livestreamed events celebrating the 2025 Canada Gairdner Award laureates. The week brought together world-leading researchers, students, educators, and the public to showcase the transformative power of scientific discovery, inspire future changemakers, and strengthen an informed society.



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SCIENCE WEEK
presented by the Krembil Foundation





Gairdner Science Week looks towards the future — engaging, inspiring, and empowering the next generation who will create new treatments, preventions, and procedures for diseases that currently lack effective therapies. I am thankful to have participated in this bold, visionary endeavor.



Michael Welsh
— 2025 Canada Gairdner
International Award laureate



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Breakthroughs in precision therapeutics are changing what it means to live with disease — turning once life-limiting diagnoses into manageable conditions. Inspired by the work of Paul Negulescu and Michael J. Welsh, the International Symposium brought together global leaders to explore how fundamental discoveries are translating into targeted therapies, improving outcomes and expanding possibilities for patients around the world.

The program opened with a keynote by Lap-Chee Tsui (1990 Canada Gairdner International Award laureate), whose Toronto-based team identified the cystic fibrosis gene. He was followed by a lineup of leading voices in the field, including Joel Finbloom, Sabine Hadida, Katherine High, Jean-Philippe Julien, Paul Negulescu, Xiao Wang, and Michael Welsh.

[Watch Now](#)

A photograph of two men in tuxedos standing at a formal event. The man on the left is older, with glasses, and the man on the right is younger. Both are smiling slightly. The background is a dimly lit room with other people and draped curtains.

LAUREATE SPOTLIGHT

PAUL NEGULESCU & MICHAEL WELSH

2025 Canada Gairdner
International Award

For more than 125,000 people worldwide living with cystic fibrosis, Michael J. Welsh and Paul Negulescu have fundamentally changed what a diagnosis means. Once a life-limiting childhood disease, CF can now be treated at its source, dramatically extending life expectancy and improving quality of life.

Dr. Welsh's discoveries revealed the molecular mechanisms underlying cystic fibrosis. This enabled Dr. Negulescu and colleagues to develop new drug therapies that restore everyday possibilities—school, careers, families — to thousands of patients.



SPOTLIGHT STORY

STEPHANIE STRAVROS

A Future Made Possible by Scientific Discovery

For Stephanie Stavros, scientific discovery is not theoretical — it is the reason she is alive. Living with cystic fibrosis, she became the first patient in Canada to receive Trikafta, a breakthrough therapy that transformed a life-limiting diagnosis into one filled with possibility. Because of that discovery, her son still has his mother, her family still has its future, and everyday moments once out of reach are now realities.

At the Canada Gairdner Awards, Stephanie met the scientists whose decades of persistence turned loss into progress and research into survival. In moments of gratitude shared with researchers whose work reshaped cystic fibrosis care, she witnessed how compassion, curiosity, and collaboration converge to change lives. Her story captures the heart of Gairdner's mission: celebrating discovery not only for its scientific achievement, but for the human impact behind every breakthrough—and the communities of patients, families, and scientists moving forward together.



GLOBAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM & PUBLIC LECTURE

Access to safe, effective nutrition is one of the most powerful determinants of child survival and long-term health. Advances in how severe acute malnutrition is understood and addressed are reshaping outcomes for children and families worldwide.

Inspired by life-saving innovations in global nutrition, the Gairdner Foundation's 2025 Global Health Symposium, Food for Thought, convened Canadian and international leaders in Montréal to examine nutrition through both global and Canadian lenses. Generously sponsored by the Institute of Philanthropy, the symposium explored food insecurity, chronic disease, climate pressures and equitable, evidence-based solutions — connecting science with policy and practice to drive lasting global impact.

[Watch Now](#)



LAUREATE SPOTLIGHT

ANDRÉ BRIEND

2025 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Award

For millions of children, access to life-saving nutrition can mean the difference between survival and loss. André Briend, recipient of the 2025 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award, transformed how severe acute malnutrition is diagnosed and treated — bringing care closer to the children who need it most.

His pioneering work introduced ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) and the mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) armband, simple innovations that allow frontline workers to identify and treat malnourished children directly within their communities. By shifting care beyond hospitals and into everyday settings, Dr. Briend's work has helped save millions of lives and fundamentally changed the global response to childhood malnutrition.



Meeting with students and colleagues during the Gairdner Science Week was a truly wonderful experience. Engaging with curious and highly motivated students and answering their questions was both stimulating and rewarding.

— André Briend



GAIRDNER ON THE HILL

Held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Gairdner on the Hill strengthens Canada's scientific pipeline by connecting discovery directly with public policy.

By bringing together policymakers and scientific leaders, the event examined how research improves health outcomes, drives innovation, and supports a resilient, knowledge-based economy. With the support of our partners — the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Genome Canada, and Research Canada — Gairdner helped bridge science and policy at a national level.

Gairdner on the Hill is also a powerful platform to showcase Canada's global leadership in science. By elevating the achievements of Gairdner laureates and Canadian researchers, the event demonstrates how international excellence and domestic capacity building go hand in hand. It underscores the role of federal policy in supporting early-career scientists, strengthening research infrastructure, and ensuring that Canada remains competitive in an increasingly innovation-driven world.





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LES PRIX CANADA GAIRDNER AWARDS

LAUREATE SPOTLIGHT

**DANIEL DE
CARVALHO**

**2025 Peter Gilgan
Canada Gairdner
Momentum Award**

Canadian scientist Daniel De Carvalho, recipient of the 2025 Peter Gilgan Canada Gairdner Momentum Award, exemplifies how research rooted in Canada can lead to global impact. At Gairdner on the Hill, he shared how his work in cancer epigenetics has advanced new blood-based approaches to cancer detection and monitoring — opening pathways toward earlier diagnosis and more personalized care for patients.

Emerging from Canadian research and now advancing toward real-world application, Dr. De Carvalho's story reflects the power of investing in discovery at home and the role Canada can play in shaping the future of cancer care worldwide.



I really enjoyed connecting with professionals and asking them about their journeys. Hearing their stories and advice gave me a better understanding of the many possibilities within STEM and motivated me to keep exploring my own path.

— **A high school student**
Gairdner Connects
programming



LAUREATE LECTURES

In 2025, the Gairdner Foundation brought the best and brightest in global science to Toronto, offering an unparalleled chance to engage with discovery at its highest level.

The Laureate Lectures showcased the prize-winning research of the 2025 Canada Gairdner Award recipients, spanning molecular biology, developmental genetics, translational medicine, and global health. Complementing these talks, two outstanding emerging researchers — selected through Gairdner’s national Early Career Investigator competition — shared their work, reinforcing Gairdner’s commitment to excellence across all career stages and to inspiring the next generation of scientific leaders.

The lectures were followed by the Gairdner Connects Student Lunch, which provided over 40 students from high schools and universities across the Greater Toronto Area with the opportunity to informally network with laureates and ECIs.

[Watch Now](#)



LAUREATE SPOTLIGHT

IVA GREENWALD, GARY STRUHL & SPYROS ARTAVANIS-TSAKONAS

2025 Canada Gairdner International Award

Few discoveries have shaped modern biology as profoundly as the work of Iva Greenwald, Gary Struhl, and Spyros Artavanis-Tsakonas. Their pioneering research revealed fundamental principles of cell-to-cell communication that guide how tissues and organs develop — insights that continue to influence fields from developmental biology to cancer and regenerative medicine.

At the 2025 Laureate Lectures, their presence offered a rare opportunity for students, trainees, and researchers to learn directly from scientists whose curiosity-driven discoveries changed the course of biology.



I met so many impressive people at all career and education stages, doing all kinds of science ranging from very basic to very applied and translational. I was thrilled and indeed, invigorated, by the various interactions I had. The Gairdner Foundation most definitely lives up to its mission statement to "celebrate, inform and inspire" and it was the thrill of a lifetime to be part of this mission.

— Iva Greenwald



WOMEN OF GAIRDNER

At a time when representation in science and medicine has never been more important, Women of Gairdner creates space for voices, experiences, and leadership that too often go unseen.

In partnership with Women's College Hospital, the fourth annual event celebrated the achievements of women and underrepresented scientists — while confronting the realities of the barriers they continue to face. Featuring 2025 laureates Jennifer Stinson and Iva Greenwald, alongside Early Career Investigator Prativa Baral, the program blended personal storytelling with candid dialogue on leadership, career pathways, and navigating systemic challenges in STEM.

High school students, postsecondary trainees, researchers, and faculty took part in facilitated discussions and interactive activities, followed by a networking session designed to build confidence, strengthen mentorship, and foster meaningful cross-career connections within a more inclusive scientific community.





LAUREATE SPOTLIGHT

JENNIFER STINSON

2025 Peter Gilgan Canada
Gairdner Momentum Award

Jennifer Stinson is a Canadian leader in pediatric pain research whose work is improving the lives of children and youth living with chronic pain. She is also the first nurse to ever receive a Gairdner Award. By translating research into practical, patient-centred digital tools, she exemplifies the impact of Canadian science — and the importance of visible leadership.

As part of Women of Gairdner, celebrating scientists like Dr. Stinson helps inspire students and trainees across Canada to see themselves in science and imagine what's possible in STEM careers.

CANADA GAIRDNER AWARDS GALA

Few moments bring the full arc of scientific impact into the same room — from discovery, to policy, to the next generation of innovators. The Canada Gairdner Awards Gala is where world-changing science is honoured not only for its brilliance, but for its power to improve lives, shape health systems, and inspire what comes next. And it all takes place in a format that is fun, engaging and often emotional.

In 2025, the Gala brought together 450 dignitaries, government representatives, academic leaders, and members of the global scientific community from Canada, the United States, and France to celebrate excellence, collaboration, and the real-world impact of discovery. Students from Visions of Science and the Canadian Association for Girls in Science attended as special guests, underscoring Gairdner's commitment to ensuring that the scientists being celebrated today are visible role models for the scientists of tomorrow. The evening reflected Gairdner's unique role as a bridge — connecting generations, sectors, and countries through science that changes the world.





Supporting the Gairdner Foundation is an investment in discovery, in people, and in Canada's leadership in global science.



Gail O'Brien
Co-Chair, The Campaign for
the Gairdner Foundation



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Science moves quickly and progress depends on partners willing to invest in what comes next.

Through the \$25 million Campaign for the Gairdner Foundation, your generosity is helping expand Gairdner's awards, educational programming, and global engagement at a pivotal moment for science. Launched in October of 2024, the campaign has raised over \$9 million to strengthen Canada's scientific pipeline, accelerate discoveries that improve health worldwide, and to ensure the Foundation can respond nimbly to emerging opportunities in research and innovation.

By supporting excellence today and inspiring curiosity for tomorrow, you — together with our valued donors and partners — are helping build an informed society, one where science delivers meaningful benefits for people and communities. On behalf of the scientists, students, and communities touched by this work, thank you for being a vital part of Gairdner's mission.

WHO WE ARE

We are proud to be supported by an exceptional group of dedicated volunteers.

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1986 Canada Gairdner

International Award laureate

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laureate

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Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Heather Munroe-Blum

Montréal, Québec

Dr. Phillip Sharp

1986 Canada Gairdner

International Award

laureate

Newton, Massachusetts

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With respect for the lands and their original caretakers.

At the Gairdner Foundation, we are grateful to connect and work on Indigenous homelands across the lands now known as Canada.

As settlers, we recognize our responsibility to acknowledge and respect these lands and the peoples who have cared for them since time immemorial. Our Toronto office is located on the traditional territory of many Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. This land is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

This territory is also governed by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant — an agreement to share, care for, and sustain the Great Lakes region in peace.





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