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## **Land-based Learning Program for Indigenous Youth in Nova Scotia Established by SuperNOVA at Dalhousie University and the Ulnooweg Education Centre**

**June 15, 2022 - Halifax, NS** - This August, 20 high school youth from Acadia First Nation will have the opportunity to attend Melkiknuawti (mel-gig-new-oh-di), a Land-based Education Program that aligns STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) concepts with local Indigenous knowledge. Melkiknuawti (that which gives you strength) describes the Mi'kmaw idea of "nature" as a path of strength. The program is developed and delivered by [SuperNOVA at Dalhousie University](#) and the [Ulnooweg Education Centre](#).

The program is free of charge and will provide youth with unique hands-on experiences. From learning about fish life cycles at Wentzell's Lake, to engaging with engineering concepts by constructing a sweat lodge, educational activities will use Windhorse as the classroom, recognizing the inherent connection that Indigenous peoples have always had with the land.

Since learning of Windhorse, Ulnooweg envisioned young Indigenous children learning from the land under the same hemlocks their ancestors did long ago. Communities across Canada have been working diligently in bringing youth back to the land. Over the last several years, Actua, the national organization of which SuperNOVA is a network member, has been working with other Indigenous communities in land-based learning programs across Canada.

Executive Director of SuperNOVA Alexandra Fenton says, "It has been a long-standing goal of SuperNOVA to establish STEM-focused land-based learning opportunities in Atlantic Canada." The program planning, led by SuperNOVA's Assistant Director Maya Potter, was solidified through the partnership with Ulnooweg Education Centre. She says that "the partnership with Ulnooweg is a critical part of establishing this program for the long term. We are honoured and grateful to be able to run Melkiknuawti at Windhorse with the Ulnooweg Education Centre."

This summer program will be the first youth educational programming taking place at Windhorse since it was transferred to Ulnooweg, and it is just one of the ways in which Ulnooweg hopes to

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realize the land's future. Ulnooweg's Chief Operating Officer, Chris Googoo, is looking forward to bringing these visions to reality and states that "Through reconnecting with the land, learning becomes a way of being, rather than just a way of knowing. Land-based learning programs allow all ages to experience their childhood innocence and wonder of the possible. We are honoured to provide this space to Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers for the sharing of our ways of knowing to Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth for future generations to come."

The program's curriculum was developed in collaboration with Acadia First Nation youth and representatives, and is directly informed by the community's educational and cultural priorities. Participants will have opportunities to take part in traditional practices and ceremonies, be engaged in land-based learning activities, develop general skills ranging from survival to digital literacy, and take time for meaningful reflection. Participants will also receive mentorship from local Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

"This program will allow youth to build and strengthen connections to their culture and language while learning from the land, mentors, and their peers," explains SuperNOVA Partnership and Development Coordinator Caitlin MacPhail.

The centrepiece of SuperNOVA's Indigenous outreach programming, the Melkiknuawti program is not a stand-alone project. Future plans include expanding the number of communities that the program reaches annually, as well as working to accredit the program in regional high schools. Looking forward, the Melkiknuawti program is not only the beginning of a new partnership, but part of creating critical educational opportunities that centre Indigenous communities.

To learn more, please visit: [www.supernova.dal.ca/land-ed](http://www.supernova.dal.ca/land-ed)

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## Connect with the Melkiknuawti Program team

**Email:** supernova@dal.ca  
**Telephone:** (902) 210-6220  
**Website:** www.supernova.dal.ca/land-ed  
**Socials:** @supernovaatdal (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook)

## Program Components

	Melkiknuawti Land-based Education Program
<b>Name</b>	Melkiknuawti (mel-gig-new-oh-di) describes the Mi'kmaw idea of "nature" as a path of strength.
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.supernova.dal.ca/land-ed">www.supernova.dal.ca/land-ed</a>
<b>Dates</b>	August 15-20, 2022
<b>Participants</b>	20 students, high school age
<b>Location</b>	<a href="#">Windhorse</a> : 129 Sarty Road, Wentzells Lake, NS
<b>Hosts</b>	- <a href="#">SuperNOVA at Dalhousie University</a> - <a href="#">Ulnooweg Education Centre</a>
<b>Supporter</b>	- <a href="#">Actua</a>
<b>2022 Community Partner</b>	- <a href="#">Acadia First Nation</a>
<b>Content</b>	- Integrate Traditional Knowledge with STEM (Science, Technology,

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	Engineering and Mathematics) based on the principles of Etuaptmunk (Two-Eyed Seeing)
<b>Structure</b>	- 1 week, full-day programming and overnight accommodation
<b>Other</b>	- Application required, open to high school students from Acadia First Nation

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## Melkiknuawti Land-based Education Program Highlights

### Inaugural year of the program in Atlantic Canada

- The Melkiknuawti Land-based Education Program will bring Indigenous youth from Acadia First Nation together at [Windhorse](#), a 200-acre preserve of pristine Nova Scotia forest where they will have the unique opportunity to learn on the land.
- Aligning STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education with local Indigenous knowledge, the Melkiknuawti Land-based Education Program will be led by staff and outreach instructors from SuperNOVA and [Ulnooweg Education Centre](#), alongside local Knowledge Keepers and Elders who will contribute cultural knowledge and traditional teachings.
- Working with Acadia First Nation, SuperNOVA and Ulnooweg will develop and deliver locally-relevant content that is aligned with community priorities and education goals. In its inaugural year, the Melkiknuawti Land-based Education Program with Acadia First Nation will build the foundation upon which this program will continue to grow, providing meaningful educational experiences for Indigenous youth in Atlantic Canada.

### Community-informed Program

- To establish priorities and the focus for Melkiknuawti, SuperNOVA and Ulnooweg Education Centre **hosted a Community Forum** in Acadia First Nation that brought community members and high school youth together to inform the program design.
- The Melkiknuawti Land-based Education Program will invite Knowledge Keepers and Elders respected by Acadia First Nation to share their knowledge with the youth participants.

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## Program Content

- This program will use the principles of Etuaptmumk (Two-Eye Seeing) to guide the integration of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Traditional Knowledge with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Participants will have opportunities to take part in traditional practices and ceremonies, be engaged in land-based learning activities that use Windhorse as the classroom, develop general skills ranging from survival to digital literacy, and take time for meaningful reflections.
- The 7 Sacred Teachings will be incorporated into the curriculum, as well as using and integrating Mi'kmawi'simk (Mi'kmaq language) throughout Windhorse and the Program.

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## Melkiknuawti Program Host Boilerplates

**SuperNOVA** is a non-profit initiative out of Dalhousie University that promotes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to youth across Atlantic Canada. Innovative workshops, camps, and community events put on are accessible to youth of all abilities, gender, and socio-economic situations. Through programs focused on exploration, creativity, and academic achievement, SuperNOVA offers youth a rewarding experience to be empowered and inspired by STEM.

**Ulnooweg Education Centre** is an Indigenous-led registered charitable organization that aims to bring foundational change and empower Atlantic Canada's Indigenous communities through the advancement of education. Their mandate reflects three major pillars ranging from collaborative research to the development and delivery of quality educational programs. Programs and initiatives are focused on key areas of science & innovation, agriculture, and financial literacy.

## Melkiknuawti Program Location Boilerplate

**Windhorse** is a natural landscape and retreat located on the shore of Atuomkuk (Wentzell Lake) of the Pijnuiskaq (LaHave River Watershed). It is a place where the ancestors of the Mi'kmaq flourished for thousands of years in Sin So'sepe'katik (Bridgewater), Nova Scotia. This land holds host to the ancient Wapane'kati forest, a woodshop, organic permaculture gardens, a conference centre with contemporary facilities, off-the-grid cabins, and a place to host visitors to connect with mother nature.

Over the last 30 years, Windhorse has been known as a healing retreat for those seeking to connect with the land. With the recent acquisition of Windhorse, the property will also be used

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for educational purposes for land-based learning programs as its living lab for the practice of Etuaptmunk (Two-Eyed Seeing) and Netukulimk; a holistic way of deepening the connection to all living and non-living things. This summer program will be the first youth educational programming taking place at Windhorse since it was transferred to Ulnooweg, and it is just one of the ways in which Ulnooweg hopes to realize the land's future.

## Melkiknuawti Program Supporter Boilerplate

**Actua** provides training, resources and support to its national network of members located at universities and colleges across Canada in the delivery of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education outreach programming. Each year, these members engage over 350,000 youth in 500 communities nationwide. Please visit Actua at [www.actua.ca](http://www.actua.ca).

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## Melkiknuawti Program Host fact sheet: SuperNOVA at Dalhousie University

**Located:** Sexton Campus, Dalhousie University - 1360 Barrington St, Halifax, NS B3H 4R2

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Email: [supernova@dal.ca](mailto:supernova@dal.ca)  
Website: [www.supernova.dal.ca](http://www.supernova.dal.ca)

**Mission:** SuperNOVA at Dalhousie University provides youth aged 5-18 across Atlantic Canada with opportunities to explore the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in their lives and develop critical skills and attitudes for lifelong learning.

## Melkiknuawti Program Host fact sheet: Ulnooweg Education Centre

**Located:** 5121 Sackville St, Halifax, NS B3J 1K1

**Contact:** Telephone: (902) 406-0979  
Email: [info@ulnoowegeeducation.ca](mailto:info@ulnoowegeeducation.ca)  
Website: [www.ulnoowegeeducation.ca](http://www.ulnoowegeeducation.ca)

**Focus:** On collaborative research, development, and delivery of educational programs and initiatives in science & innovation, agriculture, and financial literacy through a holistic approach of traditional values in Indigenous culture and language.

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## Melkiknuawti Program Supporter fact sheet: Actua

**Located:** 111 Murray St, Ottawa, ON K1N 5M5

**Contact:** Telephone: (613) 234 4137  
Email: [communications@actua.ca](mailto:communications@actua.ca)  
Website: [www.actua.ca](http://www.actua.ca)

**Mission:** We are on a mission to unlock the infinite potential of youth while radically and relentlessly removing barriers to STEM.

## Melkiknuawti Program Host Backgrounder: SuperNOVA

### Quick Facts

- SuperNOVA was founded in 1996 at Dalhousie University
- SuperNOVA offers free of charge programming to Atlantic Canadian communities including rural, remote, Black Nova Scotian, First Nations, and low-income communities.
- In 2022, SuperNOVA is offering curriculum connected STEM workshops to Grades P-12 in both English and French across Nova Scotia, fully-funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- SuperNOVA delivers programming across Atlantic Canada in communities in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Quebec.
- Since 2017 SuperNOVA has received CanCode grants from the Federal Government to provide hands-on computer science and digital literacy education to youth.

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- As well as providing our youth engagement programs, SuperNOVA offers a wide variety of training to teachers and educators to improve STEM education provision.
  - SuperNOVA is a network member of the national charity Actua, the largest STEM outreach organization in Canada inspiring the next generation of innovators through hands-on STEM and digital skills building experiences.
  - SuperNOVA has been recognised by numerous provincial and national awards, including the Canadian Women in Communications and Technology 2022 Empowerment award, the Shaping the Future Award in the 2021 Digital Nova Scotia Digital Diversity Awards and the NCWIT Aspirations in Computing 2022 Educator Award.
  - SuperNOVA has also received multiple awards from Actua, including the Actua Leadership and Innovation Award [2006], the Actua Experience Award [2016], the Actua Make Friends With Science Award [2019] and the Actua Excellence Award [2020].

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## Current Program Streams (in addition to Melkiknuawti)

**ATLAS:** ATLAS (ATLantic Academy of Space) is a partnership program hosted by SuperNOVA at Dalhousie University and GALAXIA Mission Systems which introduces students to space exploration, technologies, and artificial intelligence (AI) through hands-on experiential learning. ATLAS ([www.atlascubesat.ca](http://www.atlascubesat.ca)) is inspiring a new generation in space technology and engineering through initiatives that tie theory to practice, challenging youth to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively. Supported by NSERC Promoscience, Scale AI, the Canadian Space Agency and more, this program is free of charge to all participants.

**ITS for Girls Program:** An all-girls program that introduces female-identifying youth in Grades 4-9 to career options in STEM by introducing them to female scientists, researchers and experts. Programs are led by female-identifying instructors, mentors, and volunteers. Programs offered include a monthly STEM club, coding clubs and camps, and engineering camp.

**Girls Count Program:** Supported by the Canadian Women's Foundation Girls' Fund, Girls Count combines weekly educational programming with continued mentorship to target gender disparity within mathematics through an exploration of STEM fields for girls in grades 6-12. Girls Count offers an inclusive network of women and girls from different professions, identities and experiences to facilitate deeper engagement in mathematics fields.

**Sea to School Program:** With NSERC PromoScience funding, SuperNOVA is able to offer schools in Nova Scotia a new, free education program where SuperNOVA instructors will work regularly with Grade 4-6 classroom teachers to deliver weekly programming in classrooms for 14 weeks, focused on ocean literacy. These sessions integrate ocean concepts throughout the curriculum and include extensions to science, language arts and mathematics.

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## Land-based Learning Program for Indigenous Youth in Nova Scotia Q&A

**Q: What is the purpose of this program?**

**A:** To break down barriers between Indigenous Youth in Atlantic Canada and STEM by providing an educational experience that is culturally relevant and that prioritizes the needs of the youth and their communities.

**Q: Who is eligible to attend this program?**

**A:** This program is open to youth ages 13-18 from all Acadia First Nation communities.

**Q: Why is the program only eligible to Acadia First Nation?**

**A:** In its pilot year, this program has been developed with a community-informed curriculum with input from Acadia First Nation youth and representatives. We will be joined by local Knowledge Keepers and Elders respected by Acadia First Nation, who will share their knowledge with the participants. Future expansion of this program will allow us to reach Indigenous youth from communities all across Mi'kma'ki, with program curriculum that will be designed to serve each community's unique educational and cultural priorities while involving local community educators, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers and providing youth with opportunities to build and strengthen their relationships with these community leaders and their peers in the community.

**Q: What is land-based learning?**

**A:** Land-based learning acknowledges that Indigenous peoples have an inherent connection to the land which is integral to their wellbeing, education, and cultural preservation. This learning model uses the land as a classroom, drawing upon the natural world to help make concepts relevant to the youth.

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**Q: What is two-eyed seeing?**

**A:** Etuaptmumk, or Two-Eyed Seeing, as described by Elder Albert Marshall, is “To see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and to use both of these eyes together.”

**Q: How do I register?**

**A:** Register today at [www.supernova.dal.ca/land-ed](http://www.supernova.dal.ca/land-ed)!

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