

## Scientists in School goes back to Pickering roots

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PICKERING -- A charity that brings science to life and has touched millions of Canadian students since its early days when it was run out of a Pickering home has returned to its roots.

"We're so thankful to celebrate with all of you here today," Cindy Adams, executive director of Scientists in School, said to guests at the grand opening of the new office in Pickering on Sept. 13.

For 27 years, the SiS organization has been working to ignite the passion of science, technology, engineering and mathematical studies in children, through workshops in which students are able to see, touch, and do science investigations in their own classrooms.

The half-day workshops are run by highly trained individuals and have a maximum of 30 children participating, in order to allow for a hands-on experience.

"They get very excited," Amy Schindler, SiS director of fund development and communications, said in reference to children when they see the SiS presenters in their schools.

Adams, a plant ecologist, started volunteering with the organization two years after its inception, and it was run out of her Pickering home in the early days.

"It's hard to put words to it. Sometimes you have to stop and pinch yourself," Adams said of the program's success.

For many years, before moving to its new location in Pickering, SiS was running out of an office located in Ajax. Adams noted the new space is 40 per cent larger than the previous space, but the charity is paying the same price for rent.

"I know Ajax is a big part of your growth but welcome back to Pickering," said Ward 2 City Councillor and Deputy Mayor Ian Cumming, who spoke on behalf of the City of Pickering.

Adams said SiS loves being part of the tight-knit community in Durham and staff and volunteers are grateful to have been able to work together with teachers, schools, school boards and community partners to provide STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) enrichment to students for many years.

Although the charity has grown and now offers its hands-on, discovery-based classroom and community workshops across Ontario and Southern Alberta, it remains a strong part of students' learning in Durham.

"Last year, our passionate presenters delivered over 1,700 hands-on, discovery-based classroom and community workshops in Durham Region," Adams said.

The workshops run in around 130 classrooms on an average day during the school year and the presenters make it easy for children to believe science is really for everyone.

"The kids are completely pumped and energized," she said.

Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade executive director Kathy McKay said it's no small feat to keep an organization running for this long.

"Congratulations. You're expanding. You're going to do great things," said McKay.



PICKERING -- Lori Pett, program development co-ordinator with Scientists in School, demonstrates the elephant toothpaste experiment during the grand opening of the group's Pickering office. For 27 years, the organization has been working to ignite the passion of science, technology, engineering and mathematical studies in children. September 13, 2016.



PICKERING -- Sharon Terry, a presenter with Scientists in School, reacts to making a volcano with baking soda and vinegar during the grand opening of the group's Pickering office. For 27 years, the organization has been working to ignite the passion of science, technology, engineering and mathematical studies in children. September 13, 2016.



PICKERING -- Terry Hudson, outreach and development specialist with Scientists in School, looks through supplies in the essential ingredients storage room during the grand opening of the group's Pickering office. For 27 years, the organization has been working to ignite the passion of science, technology, engineering and mathematical studies in children. September 13, 2016.

She noted SiS has been a member of the APBOT for at least 10 years and has won a Businesses Excellence Award, even before there was a special category for not-for-profit organizations.

#### Scientists in School fast facts

- 2,334 schools participate annually
- 83 hands-on curriculum-enriching kindergarten to Grade 8 workshop topics
- 660,000 young scientists inspired each year
- 7.5 million young scientists over 27-year history
- 24,500 English and French classroom workshops delivered annually
- 370 communities across Ontario and Southern Alberta
- 58,000 parents assist 370 SiS workshop presenters

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