

Title: "Arctic Inspiration Prize: Promoting Innovation in Canada's North"

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Published in: *The Philanthropist*, Indigenous Communities and Philanthropy Journal

ISSN 2562-1491

Date: January 18, 2016

Original Link: <https://thephilanthropist.ca/2016/01/arctic-inspiration-prize-promoting-innovation-in-canadas-north/>

Date of PDF Download: June 26, 2019

Arctic Inspiration Prize: Promoting Innovation in Canada's North

By Ian Bird

Canada's Arctic is beautiful territory that is home to more than 100,000 northern Canadians, a majority of whom are Indigenous peoples with rich cultures and histories dating back thousands of years. In 2012, Arnold Witzig and Sima Sharifi founded the Arctic Inspiration Prize (AIP) to recognize the extraordinary contribution of teams working to gather and mobilize Arctic knowledge for the benefit of the Canadian Arctic, Arctic peoples, and Canada as a whole. It awards \$1-million each year. The fourth annual awards ceremony is being held in Ottawa on January 27, 2016.

The AIP is managed by the ArcticNet Network of Centres of Excellence in Canada and the Rideau Hall Foundation, with contributions and support from dozens of partners in both the north and the south. Since its inception, eight teams have been awarded prizes totalling \$3 million to support innovative, sustainable, and multi-disciplinary projects that have a long-term positive impact in Canada's Arctic communities.

These three videos showcase last year's winner, present an interview with AIP co-founder Arnold Witzig, and unveil plans for the future.

Fostering Open eXpression among Youth

At the 3rd annual Arctic Inspiration Prize awards ceremony held in 2015, Fostering Open eXpression among Youth (FOXY) became the first team to be named the sole winner or laureate, of the \$1-million prize by unanimous decision. FOXY uses theatre, storytelling, and the arts to talk to and empower young women about sexual health, sexuality, and relationships. It works in schools and youth groups throughout the Northwest Territories.

Candice Lys, executive director of FOXY and Ian Bird, executive director of the Rideau Hall Foundation, discuss how FOXY is helping to young women in Canada's Arctic build greater self-confidence and make healthy life choices.

Building partnerships in Canada's North

Part of the AIP's success has been its roots in the north and a willingness to work alongside others with different perspectives. In this candid conversation, AIP Co-Founder Arnold Witzig sits down with Ian

Bird to discuss the importance of building partnerships across geographies and bringing diverse groups of individuals and organizations from north and south to the table.

What's next for the Arctic Inspiration Prize?

Candice Lys, Ian Bird and Arnold Witzig share the goals and opportunities for the AIP to further enhance collaboration among diverse groups in the north and south. Arnold Witzig shares how the AIP will transition to an initiative owned and governed in the north.