



THE PS43 FOUNDATION CANADA AND PENNY APPEAL CANADA LAUNCH CODING FOR CHAMPIONS PROGRAM

Pascal Siakam highlights barriers in the development of computer technology skills with new initiative to support local students

TORONTO, ON — APRIL 2, 2021 — The PS43 Foundation Canada announced today a new initiative that provides students electronic access to further their fascination and learn computer technology skills in an effort to address the digital divide in Toronto.

Through a six-figure donation that includes new laptops equipped with the necessary programming, Coding for Champions aims to empower 60 sixth to eighth grade students between two schools (Queen Victoria Public School and Parkdale Jr. & Sr. Public School) with information technology and website building skills. The Coding For Champions program is supported by Penny Appeal Canada.

A lack of devices, financial constraints and time commitments are barriers students face when accessing digital literacy and coding education. In its first initiative, The PS43 Foundation Canada is committed to addressing these barriers. Leveraging his love for the city and commitment to education, Pascal Siakam hopes to drive change during the COVID-19 pandemic when the gap in accessibility has become even more apparent.

“As a child, I didn’t think I could accomplish what I have today,” said Siakam, founder of The PS43 Foundation Canada. “My father was passionate about education and my parents put me in positions to be successful by providing me access to education and sport in my home country of Cameroon; a place where such opportunities are limited and hard to come by. I want to do the same for kids in Toronto and encourage them to dream big no matter what limits they face.”

With computerized skills increasingly prominent in the workplace, Coding For Champions will prepare its students to pursue a career in coding and no longer struggle to exercise their passion due to barriers of digital access. Participants of the program will have the opportunity to apply their learning by creating web pages for The PS43 Foundation website.

Coding for Champions will take place between April and June 2021 through a 10-week engaging virtual curriculum, adhering to the health and safety protocols of the pandemic. The participating students have demonstrated a passion for coding and were selected by the school principals.

Each student will obtain a laptop, backpack, program hoodie, and any additional supplies needed. They will also receive an inspirational note from Siakam. There will be a virtual graduation ceremony at the end of the program to celebrate the students and their work. Participants will keep the equipment beyond the program as The PS43 Foundation Canada and Penny Appeal Canada understand there are limited technical devices shared between multiple individuals in the same household. Keeping the laptops will help alleviate this challenge for these students and foster a passion for long-term learning.

About The PS43 Foundation Canada

The PS43 Foundation Canada is a not-for-profit organization that finds unique ways to make a difference in the lives of children through education. Through financial literacy, sports, and life skills our goal is to teach children and give them an advantage in society. The PS43 Foundation Canada is guided by one basic principle: dream big.

About Penny Appeal Canada

Penny Appeal Canada is a relief and development organization with a really big vision for the world. We want to create the best societies we can and break the cycles of need and poverty for good with our long-term sustainable solution approach. That is why we work to turn small change into a big difference.

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For more information, please visit the following pages:

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