Ingenium Foundation
Fondation

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Stories that Connect Us

One of the things I love most about Ingenium is that every day I am reminded that innovation does not begin with technology. It begins with people and their stories.

In this issue, you will meet a donor whose family history is connected to an iconic Canadian aircraft, discover a new space exploration area designed to spark curiosity in young minds, and learn about an exhibition that celebrates Indigenous resilience, knowledge, and cultural revitalization through canoe journeys.

While these experiences are very different, they share a common thread: the power of curiosity, courage, and community to shape what comes next.

At Ingenium, we have the privilege of preserving Canada's stories of science, technology, aviation, agriculture, and innovation. But our work is about more than safeguarding the past. It is about helping Canadians see themselves in these experiences and inspiring the next generation of explorers, inventors, problem-solvers, and leaders.

At a time when many Canadians are reflecting on what unites us, I find hope in the ingenuity that has always been part of our national story. It reminds us that our greatest achievements are built through learning, collaboration, and a belief that tomorrow can be better than today.

Thank you for helping us share these stories and inspire the innovators of the future.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A Family Space for Families that Love Space:

The Exploration Station

When Aliza heard that the Canada Aviation and Space Museum (CASM) wanted more spaces for programs and activities, she had an idea. As a Public Programs Officer at CASM, she knew that parents with young children were asking for more museum activities, so she worked with the exhibitions and science teams to develop the Exploration Station, with funding from the Ingenium Foundation.

Designed as an open-ended play space for children aged 3-7, the space includes a family playroom, reading nook, building blocks, foam climbing blocks, and more. It also gives caregivers a place to relax while children explore.

"Most of the rest of the museum's children's activities are aviation themed, so we needed more space themed activities," she explains. Children are encouraged to explore the idea of what it means to be part of a team going to space. The reception has been positive: "People like having a place to chill and not have to worry."

The room opened in Summer 2025 and was originally branded around the Artemis II mission. Following the mission's success, the space was reimagined as the Exploration Station. And even though the space is a hit with kids, plans are already underway to make it even more immersive.

Accessibility is also central to the design, with activities that can be experienced in multiple ways and an emphasis on hands-on play. Most of all, the team hopes to build on the pride generated by the Artemis II mission.

"Kids can put on a headset and hear what it's like to be in mission control — there's a fantastic opportunity to bolster that national pride," Aliza exclaims with a smile.

Memories Are Made in the Kitchen

At the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, *Memories Are Made in the Kitchen* explores how food connects people across cultures and generations through experiences that feel both familiar and personal.

The exhibition is organized around themes that highlight how everyday practices in the kitchen carry knowledge, traditions, and meaning. Through artifacts, community objects, audio, and visual storytelling, visitors experience the diversity of kitchens across Canada.

What makes this exhibition especially compelling is how it was created. Rather than building the story around objects alone, the museum worked directly with communities across the country to gather stories, photographs, and kitchen tools that reflect lived experience. Through workshops and conversations, more than 100 participants shared their own perspectives on food, culture, and identity, shaping the exhibition in a way that is collaborative and grounded in real voices.

These contributions add depth and perspective to the exhibition. A recipe becomes a story of migration, a cooking technique reflects adaptation, and a shared meal speaks to connection across generations. Together, they show how food shapes daily life and community. Just as importantly, the exhibition fosters a sense of belonging by creating a welcoming space where people can share stories, reflect on experiences, and see themselves represented.

They also play an important role in strengthening Ingenium's national collection. By incorporating community-contributed materials alongside artifacts from the domestic technology collection, the museum is capturing not only how food is prepared, but the experiences surrounding it.

For visitors, the result is an exhibition that feels both relatable and expansive. It offers opportunities to learn and recognize how individual experiences contribute to a shared Canadian story.

Bringing Faith Fyles into Full Bloom

Some of the most powerful stories are the ones quietly held within our collections, waiting to be uncovered.

At Ingenium, one story belongs to Faith Fyles, Canada's first female government botanist and a pioneer at the intersection of science and art. Working at the Central Experimental Farm in the early 20th century, she created hundreds of detailed botanical watercolours between 1921 and 1931. Originally produced for research and education, these works now reveal something more. They reflect the care, precision, and dedication behind scientific discovery, captured through an artist's hand.

Today, new research is bringing her story into clearer focus. Much of Fyles' life and creative work remained largely unexplored. This initiative is uncovering new insights into her career, identifying previously undocumented works, and enhancing 217 collection records to improve research and public access.

Through this work, a fuller picture begins to emerge. One that reflects the important role women played in shaping Canada's scientific landscape, often without recognition. It also highlights how art and science have long worked together to help us understand the world around us.

Through a partnership with the Ottawa Art Gallery, her work is now reaching new audiences in *Faith Fyles: In Full Bloom*. Though created as scientific records, these pieces continue to resonate as expressions of creativity, curiosity, and Canadian ingenuity.

At its heart, this project reflects the power of a national collection. It is not only about preserving artifacts. It is about uncovering their stories and connecting us more deeply to our past, and to one another.

Faith Fyles
Bingo apple, 1921
Watercolour
Artifact no. 1987.2378

Sacred Journey: An Exhibition (1)40 Years in the Making

It was the summer of ’84 and Vancouver’s mayor was busy planning for Expo 86, a world’s fair that doubled as the city’s centennial celebration. Hoping for Indigenous representation, he reached out to Frank Brown, then a college student. Frank realized he had an opportunity to revitalize traditional canoe culture.

He went on to organize the first canoe journey in generations, featuring the *glwa*, or ocean-going canoe. A movement was born as communities up and down the Pacific Coast began to revitalize their traditional canoe cultures. By 1993, Frank’s home community of Bella Bella was hosting the Tribal Canoe Journey, which continues today with thousands of participants.

Traditional canoe culture declined under policies such as the 1886 potlatch ban, which banned Indigenous cultural and spiritual gatherings, and residential schools. Today, however, there is a lot to celebrate. Canoe revitalization has supported language and culture revitalization, community healing, and youth empowerment across the Pacific Coast.

To celebrate and document that revitalization, Frank has led the creation of the Sacred Journey exhibition, which tells the story of this resurgence, the struggles, joys, and life-changing experiences it represents. Opening at the Canada Science and Technology Museum on June 20 with support from the Ingenium Foundation, the exhibition features a symbolic canoe installation, video testimonials from community members, panels, and artwork.

Gabrielle, a project manager at the museum, said the exhibition reflects Ingenium’s commitment to reconciliation as its first major exhibition developed in partnership with an Indigenous community. The Heiltsuk Nation serves as steward of the exhibition.

“We want to be able to offer this platform for the Heiltsuk Nation to tell their story and for local Indigenous communities to visit the exhibit, gather together, and share stories from their own canoe cultures,” Gabrielle added.

An opening ceremony brought in community members from local Algonquin First Nations to canoe with Heiltsuk members, including Frank, along the Ottawa River. Additional public programming, including beading, canoe building, paddle making, and film screening, is planned until the exhibition ends in January.

Meet Captain Barber –

A Donor Destined for an Aviation Passion

Réjean, CASM Conservator, and Chris, President of PNAC, support the ongoing restoration of the North Star aircraft.

For Captain Josh Barber, the Canadair North Star represents more than an aircraft – he wouldn't be here without it. In 1952, his mother boarded her first airplane—a North Star—to travel to Canada and marry his father.

With a father in the Royal Canadian Air Force, Barber grew up as a self-described air force brat, surrounded by airplanes and developed a lifelong passion for all things aviation.

Barber himself ended up serving in the Royal Canadian Navy as a ship driver and intelligence officer, retiring after 34 years of service. After moving to the Ottawa area 30 years ago, he became a frequent visitor and supporter of the Canada Aviation and Space Museum.

He originally supported the Ingenium Foundation's efforts to restore the Bristol Beaufighter, a World War II-era aircraft that served a variety of roles, from heavy fighter to torpedo bomber. The Beaufighter also held a personal connection – his father had flown in them during his RCAF career.

Still, the North Star held a special connection, as his parents talked about it growing up. Barber has been a proud supporter of the Ingenium Foundation's ongoing support to restore that post-war passenger and cargo aircraft, carried out by museum staff and volunteers from the Project North Star Association of Canada (PNAC).

"Aviation is a key element in the development of Canada, and military and wartime contributions led to the plane," Captain Barber explained. "It's important for future generations to see what Canada has produced in the world."

We couldn't agree more.

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