



Institute
for Canadian
Citizenship

Institut pour
la citoyenneté
canadienne

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2024

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship recognizes Canada's top institutions for Newcomers

Inaugural Canoo Awards to celebrate institutions improving the newcomer experience.

January 22, 2024, TORONTO, ON – In recognition of the critical work that [Canoo's](#) partners are doing for newcomers across Canada [at a time when they are faced with growing challenges](#), the [Institute for Canadian Citizenship \(ICC\)](#) is launching its inaugural *Canoo Awards*, celebrating the Canadian culture and nature institutions that set a new standard in helping newcomers feel at home in Canada.

The 2023 Canoo Award winners are: the [TELUS Spark Science Centre](#); the [Biodôme](#) (Espace pour la vie); [VIA Rail](#); and the [Toronto Zoo](#). The 2023 *Canoo Awards* will be presented on February 6, 2024 at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO).

"Canoo is Canada's biggest and most effective tool for welcoming the newcomers that drive our prosperity, but it is nothing without the commitment and generosity of our partners," said Daniel Bernhard, the CEO for the ICC. "The inaugural *Canoo Awards* recognize four outstanding organizations that are rising to a higher calling for Canada: building a country where newcomers belong and want to stay. We are beyond grateful to these four winners, and hope that these Awards inspire others to join the *Canoo Welcome Network* and participate in this vital effort for Canada."

This year's *Canoo Awards* go to four iconic institutions that have collectively welcomed over 150,000 newcomers with free admission and heavily discounted experiences in 2023 via Canoo. By offering one-of-a-kind experiences for newcomers, these organizations do a great service to all of Canada, supporting an inclusive society where people from around the world are happy to live and excited to contribute to the country's prosperity for the long-term.

The 2023 *Canoo Awards* Presenting Sponsors are CIBC, Bell, & MobSquad. Air Canada is the Official Airline Sponsor.

The first-ever *Canoo Awards* are proudly presented to the following organizations in the following four categories:

Kids' Choice Award, sponsored by MobSquad: TELUS Spark Science Centre

The *Kids' Choice Award* recognizes a Canoo partner attraction with the highest proportion of child admissions via Canoo over the last year. In 2023, TELUS Spark Science Centre welcomed the largest proportion of Canoo members kids to its property in Calgary, Alberta.



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Breakthrough Award, sponsored by Bell: the Biodôme (Espace pour la vie)

The *Breakthrough Award* recognizes the most visited Canoo partner attraction who joined the program within the last year, quickly becoming a new favourite among newcomers. In 2023, Biodôme welcomed 12 thousand Canoo members to its property in Montreal, Quebec.

Founders' Award, sponsored by Air Canada: VIA Rail

The *Founders' Award* recognizes the Canoo partner that has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to advancing the ICC's co-Founders' vision of an inclusive Canada that embraces newcomers and all they contribute to our society. Since 2012, Canoo and VIA Rail Canada have connected 50,0000 members to destinations from coast-to-coast.

Canoo Partner of the Year Award, sponsored by CIBC: Toronto Zoo

The *Partner of the Year Award* recognizes the Canoo partner attraction that welcomed the most newcomers in 2023: the stand-out favourite among Canoo members. In the last year, the Toronto Zoo saw 49,0000 Canoo members visit its site.

Since 2010, Canoo has welcomed over 500,000 newcomer members with transformative experiences of Canada. All recent permanent residents and new citizens can join Canoo for free by downloading the Canoo app.

Immigrating can be challenging. Canoo's expanding network of partners has helped newcomers and their families access and experience the very best of Canada. These organizations are stepping up for a higher purpose: to make Canada easier to love and ensure it remains a forever home for newcomers, whose talents and contributions will secure Canada's prosperity for generations to come.

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Quotes from our Canoo Award winners:

"Space for Life and the Biodôme are very proud to be the first to win this prize from the Institute for Canadian Citizenship and even more proud to be part of the Canoo family. Through its five museums, Space for Life contributes to Montreal's thriving cultural vitality. Protecting nature and biodiversity is our raison d'être, and we are extremely happy to help newcomers discover all the ways they can help care for our planet,"

- Julie Jodoin, Director of Space for Life.

"Receiving the Kids' Choice Award from Canoo, a program supporting newcomers to Canada, is a profound honour for TELUS Spark Science Centre. This recognition highlights Spark's dedication to embracing diversity and fostering accessibility to science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM). Welcoming newcomers aligns seamlessly with Spark's mission, and every child's visit through Canoo reflects the science centre's dedication to providing an inclusive space where all young minds, regardless of background or circumstance, can explore the marvels of science. This

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award serves as inspiration for Spark to persist in its journey, ensuring that every newcomer child has the opportunity to discover, learn, and thrive within the fascinating world of science."

- Roderick Tate, President and CEO of TELUS Spark

"We are thrilled and honoured to receive the Founders' Award from the ICC. Since 2012, our partnership with the ICC has played a pivotal role in introducing tens of thousands of newcomers to the beauty of Canada. This award is a testament to our dedication to advancing our common vision of an inclusive society and we look forward to continuing to shape a future together where diversity is celebrated, and newcomers are embraced for the richness they bring to the fabric of our great country."

- Mario Pélouquin, President and Chief Executive Officer of Via Rail

"Our team is committed to ensuring we serve all of our communities and are a Zoo for all! This award shows how we all can play a role in helping people settle in and thrive in our City. On behalf of our staff, volunteers and Board of Management, we are delighted to receive this recognition from Canoo that our efforts are making a positive difference for newcomers."

- Dolf DeJong, CEO of Toronto Zoo

About

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) works to unlock Canada for newcomers, facilitating and encouraging the journey towards full and active Canadian citizenship. The ICC is an independent charity, co-founded in 2006 by the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul.

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