



PRESS RELEASE  
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## **West Island Community Shares Teams Up with Ciena to Increase STEM Learning Opportunities for Youth**

***Multi-year commitment will drive digital inclusion and benefit 8 West Island organizations.***

**Beaconsfield, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024** – West Island Community Shares is pleased to announce a new multi-year collaboration with Ciena focused on closing the digital divide gap for West Islanders in need.

For many of the community groups supported by West Island Community Shares, especially those serving an underprivileged clientele, online access and digital literacy is a daily hurdle for their beneficiaries. Limited level of digital abilities has, more so now than ever, a direct impact on one's potential to function and thrive in today's connected community. It is with that belief that Ciena has chosen to support West Island Community Shares who, with a network of over 40 organizations, reaches West Islanders in need from all age groups, educational and economic backgrounds.

Ciena's investment is targeted to provide financial support to eight West Island community organizations, who provide crucial services to youth from 6 to 18 years old. This donation will increase the youth's access and exposure to STEM activities and improve their digital literacy through increased programming, technology, and broadband access at the community groups' service sites. By increasing access and exposure to STEM activities, such as coding, this collaboration will help to empower children to become active creators and contributors in the digital world.

### **Quotes:**

"Ciena's commitment to community involvement is deeply ingrained in the company culture. Having personally witnessed the profound impact of West Island Community Shares (WICS) in the local community, it was a natural choice for us to establish a multi-year collaboration with them through Ciena's Digital Inclusion Grant program. I am confident that this will yield significant positive outcomes in the community and for the organizations supported by WICS and its devoted personnel." – **Kamran Ghazian**, Senior Director of Marketing Strategy & Operations, Ciena.

"Ciena's support is timely and essential in today's digital age. It allows West Island Community Shares to focus on bridging gaps for a clientele for whom digital literacy remains challenging. Whether it is by providing coding classes to underprivileged teens or by offering inclusive access to internet for all, the impact of their digital abilities plays a crucial part in their future and their success." – **Meagan Somerville**, Executive Director, West Island Community Shares

**About West Island Community Shares**

West Island Community Shares is a unique charitable organization dedicated to building a strong, resilient, inclusive and healthy West Island community. We do this by raising funds for over 40 local community groups which focus on six key areas: building strong, resilient children and youth; supporting vulnerable populations; promoting healthy minds and bodies; providing basic necessities; empowering women; and supporting green initiatives. We focus our efforts on ensuring that our community groups have the resources they need to meet the growing and ever-changing demand for their services.

West Island Community Shares is accredited by Imagine Canada for excellence in accountability, transparency and governance as a charitable organization.

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**For more information:**

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