

**For Immediate Release****Contact:** Julia Blackburn**Phone:** 647 – 244 - 9686**Email:** Julia.Blackburn@npowercanada.ca**NPower Canada Announces Launch in Toronto**

**Toronto (September 8, 2014)** - Today marks the launch of NPower Canada, which will provide youth with proven, no-cost training for skilled, in-demand information technology (IT) jobs. In addition, there will be a skills-based volunteering & mentoring program connecting tech professionals with high-impact charities and innovative education partners to inspire youth to pursue tech careers - ultimately building the IT capacity of the sector. NPower Canada is joining one of its founding partners, CivicAction, in their ground-breaking efforts to connect more youth in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton Area (GTHA) with meaningful and sustainable employment. CivicAction launched its new initiative Escalator: Jobs for Youth Facing Barriers at a press conference earlier today.

NPower Canada will work with a wide variety of leading corporate and community partners, including Accenture, ACCES Employment, Cisco, Michael P Clemons Foundation, Ryerson University, and TD Bank. CEO, Stephanie Cuskley, shared, "We are incredibly excited about the opportunity to work with such industry-leading partners. Through this initiative, Canadian corporate tech players are joining with their community partners to equip Toronto's youth with the tech and professional skills, as well as the access and opportunity, to achieve career success."

Youth unemployment in Toronto stands above 20%, among the highest in Canada<sup>i</sup>, with nearly a quarter of jobless youth reporting that their biggest barrier to employment is a lack of marketable skills.<sup>ii</sup> Simultaneously, two-thirds of Canadian CEOs report skills shortages, and 106,000 additional IT workers must be hired by 2016 to meet industry demand.<sup>iii</sup> By connecting employers with trained young talent, NPower Canada will help build a more productive and prosperous city where everyone succeeds.

Starting this November, NPower Canada will deliver its Technology Service Corps Canada (TSC) program to 25 Toronto-area youth at Ryerson University's downtown Toronto campus. Ryerson has generously provided NPower Canada with office space and a state-of-the-art classroom, while TD Bank has kindly donated equipment to help the students achieve and excel.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity to host NPower Canada at Ryerson. It fits well on many levels - with Ryerson's commitment to diversity, to promoting youth employment and to providing alternative pathways to the IT sector in order to address the skills gap. As Canada's first Ashoka Changemaker Campus and a city builder, Ryerson partners with the community and the private sector to advance social and economic goals," said Wendy Cukier, Vice President, Research and Innovation, Ryerson University and founder of the Diversity Institute and NPower Canada Board Member.

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TSC offers 15 weeks of complete training including Cisco-designed IT Essentials to prepare for A+ certification along with professional development and life skills coaching. Hands-on learning is enriched by one-to-one mentorships with tech professionals and an internship, ensuring that students are confident, marketable and positioned for success.

“Accenture has teamed with NPower Canada to enhance skills development for at risk youth in Toronto. This is a natural fit with our Skills to Succeed corporate citizenship initiative, which aims to equip 700,000 people around the world by 2015 with workplace and entrepreneurial skills,” said Stephen Gardiner, Managing Director, Digital at Accenture in Canada, and member of NPower Canada’s board. “We know that addressing our nation’s skills gap is a top priority for organizations in Canada.”

Based on our proven track record, we expect at least 80% of our graduates to secure employment and/or pursue further education. Graduates also receive post-hire career coaching, holistic services, alumni networking and additional certification support.

NPower Canada is mobilizing the local and national tech ecosystem to support today’s youth. By engaging with a diverse array of employers, ranging from global enterprises to dynamic start-ups, current industry partners interested in sourcing entry level tech talent can help make a positive difference in their communities.

“I have been fortunate to work in the technology sector for over 20 years, and know that the ability to access training and skills development opportunities is essential for success. Cisco is proud to support NPower Canada in their effort to bring these much needed services to at-risk and underserved young adults in Toronto, enabling program participants the chance at sustainable, rewarding careers,” says Jeffrey Maddox, Vice President, SP Sales, Cisco Canada and NPower Canada Board Member.

NPower Canada will also engage its partners to achieve social impact through The Community Corps Canada (TCC), a skills-based volunteering & mentoring program. These corporate technology volunteers will help enable schools and nonprofits across North America to use technology more effectively and inspire the next generation to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The program also includes virtual as well as on-site volunteering opportunities to help scale the mentoring and technology support initiatives.

In partnership with CivicAction and other local, innovative leaders across sectors and industries, we are committed to offering underserved youth in the GTA a brighter future. For more information about The Community Corps Canada partnership opportunities, hosting an intern or becoming an NPower Technology Service Corps Canada student, please visit: [www.npowercanada.ca](http://www.npowercanada.ca).

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<sup>i</sup> Statistics Canada, 2011 Household Survey (NHS) Data for Toronto CMA

<sup>ii</sup> Canada Labour Force Survey: Youth Employment Fact Sheet Statistics

<sup>iii</sup> ICTC CTIC: Developing Tomorrow’s Workforce Today “Outlook 2011-2016: It’s Time for Action” Report