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## **OCIF invests in The Knowledge Society to develop the workforce of the future**

(CALGARY, Alta.) – The Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (“OCIF”) will provide up to \$256,000 to The Knowledge Society (“TKS”) in the form of scholarships for 80 Calgary high school students to complete a 10-month skills accelerator program.

Through the program, students gain real-world exposure, mentorship from industry partners and hands-on opportunities to solve real problems faced by global companies. Many TKS alumni have gone on to build their own startups and work at top organizations like Stanford, MIT, Berkeley, SpaceX, Microsoft and more.

“One way we can ensure Calgary’s future workforce is diversified, agile and ready to contribute is by affording opportunities for our young people to achieve their biggest career ambitions through programs like TKS,” said Brad Parry, CEO, Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund and President and CEO, Calgary Economic Development. “This investment will have a positive long-term impact as we continue to seek an innovative and diversified economic future for Calgary.”

OCIF funding will support scholarship resources at TKS, increasing access to the program for students who face financial barriers to participating. On average, 70 per cent of TKS students receive tuition support to enroll, and TKS enrolls over 50 per cent female and over 75 per cent underrepresented students in their programs.

“Reducing financial barriers for future-focused youth learning opportunities is critical to ensuring the next generation of entrepreneurs, innovators and scientists are fully equipped to make a positive difference in our city and the world,” said Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek.

The program is designed to deliver exponential personal, social and professional growth for students to achieve their career ambitions – whether it’s to become an entrepreneur, work for a leading organization or create new technologies.

“We work with the most curious and driven students from over 60 countries, and it is clear there is a high concentration of curious and driven young people in Calgary. I am excited for this partnership with OCIF to invest in the city and provide the resources, program and mentorship required to help accelerate the potential of these students and achieve things far beyond what most people think is possible at this age,” said Navid Nathoo, Co-founder, The Knowledge Society.

“If we can train olympic level athletes and top musicians, then we can also train olympic level CEOs, innovators, thought leaders, researchers, you name it. TKS has been seeing these outcomes for years. I am personally looking forward to seeing TKS students make waves and

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represent Calgary and Canadians on a global stage," said Nadeem Nathoo, Co-founder, The Knowledge Society.

"TKS changed my life trajectory. It made me realize that regardless of my age, I could use technology to solve some of the world's biggest problems. Without the mindsets, network and community I gained through TKS, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to work with the UN to implement a pilot of an innovative toilet system in Nigeria or raise \$250k to prevent falls for seniors using smart clothing. Without this program, I wouldn't be the person I am today, and I can't thank Navid and Nadeem enough for changing my life," said Ayaan Esmail, Co-Founder Fallyx, TKS Alumnus, 2018.

This investment will positively impact youth skill development, an enhanced workforce, talent retention and ecosystem development and engagement in Calgary. Developing and retaining a skilled talent pool is key for cities to successfully navigate national and global headwinds.

TKS Calgary is a program spanning 10 months for students aged 13-17. The program will deliver weekly sessions covering emerging technologies, real-world skills and mindset development skills. Students will be able to connect with local experts, attend events and gain internship opportunities. It is currently based out of Platform Calgary.

OCIF is a \$100-million initiative launched by the City of Calgary in 2018 to make strategic investments to diversify and transform the economy. It is a critical tool to advance Calgary's economic strategy, *Calgary in the New Economy*, as each investment is designed to spur a larger increase in economic activity.

To date, \$82.3 million has been allocated to 27 projects, which has spurred up to \$869 million dollars of investment, the creation, training and retention of ~3,300 direct and indirect jobs, supported or started nearly 630 local companies and trained over 3,700 individuals. For more information, please visit our [website](#).

## ABOUT OPPORTUNITY CALGARY INVESTMENT FUND

Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund was created as a wholly owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary in 2018 to support catalytic investments within the city to help diversify and transform the economy. The fund is administered by Calgary Economic Development and has a volunteer Board of Directors. For more information, please visit our [website](#).

### For more information contact:

Evynn Anderson  
Coordinator, Communications  
Media line: 403 880 7040

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Email: [media@calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com](mailto:media@calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com)

## ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Founded in 2016, The Knowledge Society (TKS) is a 10-month accelerator program for curious and ambitious teens between the ages of 13-17. Through project-based learning and real-world skill building, TKS trains young people to solve the world's biggest problems using emerging technologies. TKS has trained more than 2,000 students across North America in areas such as artificial intelligence, regenerative medicine, and quantum computing, among others.

### For more information contact:

Ossama Ouahdi  
Head of Growth  
Phone: 1 855-244-7866  
Email: [ossama@tk.world](mailto:ossama@tk.world)