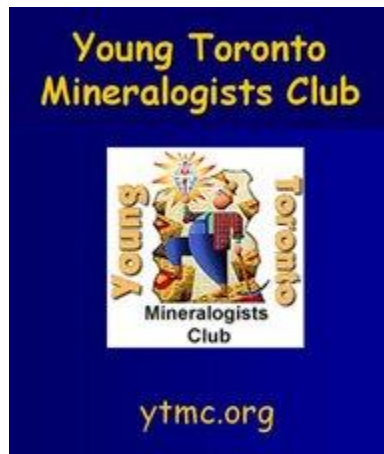


## 2024 CCFMS Public Education Award Nomination

### The Young Toronto Mineralogists Club (YTMC) Nominated by the Sudbury Rock and Lapidary Society

The Young Toronto Mineralogists Club (YTMC), based in Toronto, Ontario, is a club for young people 8 to 15 years old with a scientific interest in rocks, minerals, fossils and geology. Up to 50 students have participated in the program each year with **hundreds of kids** having completed the program over the past 23 years. Currently there are six teenaged volunteers. The popularity of program is evidenced by the annual long wait list. The YTMC maintains a website at: [www.ytmc.org](http://www.ytmc.org).



The whole family is included in the single-family annual membership fee of \$75. A family must include at least one adult who is related to the YTMC child participant as a parent, guardian, foster parent, or grandparent. It can include up to two adults from this list. The family may include any number of siblings and foster children. Other family structures may be considered at the discretion of the YTMC council. Parents/guardians are encouraged to remain at the meeting.



Class of 2018

The YTMC is a volunteer organization and was inaugurated in September 2001 by Brian Joyce, Mary Joyce, Dave Joyce and Len Buchanan. In addition to Brian, Mary, Dave and Len who form the council to run the YMTC activities, Marilyn Burston came on council a month or so after YTMC was formed and has done a lot over the past several years. She sorts and stores all the specimens that are donated to keep the flow of specimens going to the kids.

Meetings are held on the first Saturday of the month from October to June. With the recent closure of the Ontario Science Centre, where meetings were held for many years, the YTMC meetings have moved to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) or can be held at other venues such as University of Toronto when the ROM is not available. Members are expected to be respectful and attentive at meetings.

The YTMC has and continues to provide the students and their families with the following.

- Short talks on earth science topics from experts (a light snack is provided at each meeting).
- A fascinating, informative and fun time.
- Hands-on mineral and fossil displays.
- Show-and-tell, and identification help including the option to be the Mineralogist of the Month, to display a portion of the member's collection to the public.
- Workshops on mineral and micro-mineral identification.
- Field trips to quarries, University of Toronto, University of Waterloo, and other collecting sites within a day's drive of Toronto, with an emphasis on safety standards. Attending field collecting trips requires all adult members to adhere to health and safety standards, and to understand, accept, and sign a liability waiver for themselves and their dependants. Site owners may require additional waivers.
- Handouts of mineral and fossil samples.
- Hands-on activities, take-home puzzles and quizzes, and mineral identification contests.
- Monthly newsletter.
- Annual Mining Matters workshop.
- Junior and Senior 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners based on points earned for participation through the year.
- Junior and Senior "What's It?" contests wherein kids identify the minerals, and the child with the most correct answers gets first choice of the minerals in the contest; second most correct gets second choice, etc.
- Monthly Zonework (quizzes and puzzles) draw for prizes such as specimens, books, etc.
- Joe Mandarino Memorial Prize from the Walker Mineralogical Club to the member that excelled at participating and promoting the hobby.



The YTMC has benefited from many individuals and organizations who have generously provided financial and in-kind sponsorship:

- The Royal Ontario Museum
- The University of Toronto Department of Earth Sciences
- Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy, and Petroleum
- Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada
- Mining Matters
- The Walker Mineralogical Club
- The Gem and Mineral Club of Scarborough
- David K. Joyce Minerals
- McDougall Minerals
- Steve Szilard
- Tony Steede
- Toronto Geological Discussion Group
- The Kawartha Rock and Fossil Club
- The Canadian Micro Mineral Association
- The Ontario Science Centre

The YTMC is a very worthy recipient of the 2024 CCFMS Public Education Award. The YTMC has influenced hundreds of kids and their families, instilling in them a strong interest in minerals, rocks, fossils, and geology. A number of the participants have gone on to become geologists and earth scientists.

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## **Testimonials**

### **Testimonial: Ruth Debicki**

I had the opportunity to give a presentation to the members of the Young Toronto Mineralogists Club in 2010, and was very impressed with the group for a number of reasons.

The organizers and mentors of the Young Toronto Mineralogists Club are very knowledgeable and dedicated, and contribute a considerable amount of time and resources to the group each year. Some have been involved for many years. The children who participate are eager to learn; ask surprisingly sophisticated questions for students 8 to 15 years old; and have an exceptional opportunity to handle – and collect – rocks and minerals.

The success of the organization speaks for itself, because there was a waiting list to join in 2010, and there is still a waiting list to join today. And, the consequences of participating in the group are demonstrable in that the members are exposed to a range of essential Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) that stand them in good stead in their future studies and careers. One former member who has gone on to undertake Ph.D. studies in geology has noted that the group helped foster his dreams.

### **Testimonial: Natasha Glionna**

Our family joined the Young Toronto Mineralogists Club (YTMC) in September 2019, when my son James was 11 and my daughter was 8. Both of my children were thrilled to discover a community dedicated to their interests in geology and mineralogy. We first learned about the club at a rock and mineral show, and the moment we joined, it was clear that YTMC was not only a place for learning but also a vibrant community where friendships naturally blossomed among like-minded kids.

Through YTMC's engaging talks, guest speakers, and hands-on activities, our children's enthusiasm and understanding of earth sciences have flourished. We, as parents, found the sessions educational as well, and it's been incredible to watch our children's growth—from curious learners to confident young leaders. James, for example, has been volunteering with YTMC for the past two years, which has allowed him to give back to a community that has given our family so much.

One of the standout experiences for our family was a mining trip to Bancroft, which will forever be a cherished memory. Over the weekend, we dug, trekked, learned, and discovered together, surrounded by the enthusiasm of YTMC's leaders. The club leaders' passion and commitment to teaching shines through, and their generosity with time and knowledge is inspiring. They often go above and beyond, tailoring specimen bags and activities to individual kids' interests. This personalized approach has sparked curiosity in my children about complex topics like mineral composition and formation processes, deepening their connection to the field.

Thanks to YTMC, our children have gained not only knowledge but also confidence, friendships, and a profound appreciation for the earth sciences. The club has made an indelible impact on our family, and we are grateful for the lasting memories and skills YTMC has given us. For these reasons, I wholeheartedly nominate YTMC for the 2024 CCFMS Public Education Award.

**Testimonial: Derek Leung**

My passion for mineralogy started in kindergarten, when I collected rocks from the schoolyard and brought them home. Since the early age of 6, the Young Toronto Mineralogists Club has supported my dreams of becoming a mineralogist, through monthly mineral identification exercises, exciting presentations on mineral collecting, and even field collecting trips. Now a Ph.D. candidate in geology at Laurentian University, I am indebted to the role that the YTMC has had on shaping my career.

**Testimonial: Bradley McMillen**

Our teenagers joined YTMC as early grade schoolers and they have lots of fond memories about learning and collecting minerals with the YTMC community. We knew right away our kids would enjoy the hands-on learning experience at YTMC, which is guided by a group of nurturing volunteers who are not only passionate about mineralogy but also extremely knowledgeable. Each of them offers their special stories and passion for collecting minerals, the ins and outs of how to identify them and teach an appreciation of the underlying science. A highlight of each meeting is the kids eagerly identifying minerals with the opportunity to bring home "cool" specimens for their collections. The annual field trip to collect minerals at various quarries and deposits is a particular favourite of my children. Getting muddy and having lots of laughs and finding their own specimens is always part of the fun with this amazing group. When we used to meet in the Ontario Science Centre, it was always great to see the YTMC members have the opportunity to share their knowledge and collections with other children attending the museum.



## **Testimonial: Gaelle Chevalier**

Since being a toddler, our daughter has always been fascinated and interested by rocks and minerals, collecting rocks on her walks, digging inside boulders with a stick to retrieve crystal fragments during school recess, fascinated with the rocks and minerals collection at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

Wanting to help her develop her keen and quite specific interest, we discovered the Young Toronto Mineralogists Club (YTMC). At the time, she was still too young to be part of the club, which was also full and not accepting new members. She still managed to get invited as a guest to attend one of the meetings, and a few months later she was accepted as a member.

We can say that the day she joined YTMC, she has found her place and her peers. Not only did the club help her increase her knowledge about rocks, minerals and fossil identification, it has contributed to her massive amount of knowledge in the field due to the invested club mentors, the extremely high quality of monthly theoretical and hands-on presentations, as well as fun homework and annual field trips.

YTMC is for young people between 8 and 15 years of age. It does an amazing job at teaching the kids all sorts of topics related to the field, without dumbing down the information. We remember our daughter, 9 at the time, keenly following high-level presentations such as basic chemistry, physical properties of minerals, or alkaline intrusives! The club also offers an amazing outreach and public speaking initiative where after each meeting, YTMC young members can present their rock and mineral collections to the general public visiting the Ontario Science Centre (OSC), under the supervision of club mentors and OSC staff.

Since becoming a member, our daughter has won several monthly and annual awards with the club. A few years ago, she also partnered with a friend and club member to develop a workshop for Grade 4 students, combining a formal presentation on the type and properties of minerals with a hands-on workshop consisting of 5 different stations. They were able to offer this workshop two years in a row at two local public schools, in English and in French, with great success. We strongly believe that this successful school outreach project was only possible because both kids' interest was strongly nurtured by the club.

Our daughter is now in Grade 10. For the last two years, she has moved from being an active participant to being a volunteer for the club, and she loves it just as much. She helps with various things such as setting up microscopes, and still enjoys very much attending the sessions and interacting with the other members and volunteers, as well as her mentors.

The adult mentors running the club and the guest speakers are highly passionate earth science experts. We are so very thankful for their investment and generosity to pass along their knowledge and expertise to the keen young club members. We would like to nominate YTMC for this award because it was through the club mentors' generous sharing of knowledge and expertise and the extremely high quality of

the monthly meetings that our daughter's interest in mineralogy has been so well nurtured and expanded over the years.

~The Chu family

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