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MEDIA RELEASE

ACTUA HIGHLIGHTED IN 2017 FEDERAL BUDGET SPEECH AS LEADER IN DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Ottawa, March 22, 2017

Today the Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance tabled the Government of Canada's 2017 Budget: *Building a Strong Middle Class*. In it, Minister Morneau announced a *Teaching Kids to Code fund* that will support the development of digital literacy and coding skills among Canadian youth.

In his speech to the House of Commons, Minister Morneau listed Actua as an example of who this fund could benefit.

"To give our young people the best possible start, we will promote hands-on learning in science, technology, engineering, and math, especially for young women, girls, and Indigenous youth.

Building on work being done by impressive organizations like Ladies Learning Code and Actua, we will encourage students to learn coding in the same way they learn to read and write, preparing our kids for the jobs of the future."

"We are proud to have Actua formally recognized in today's Budget speech as a national leader in building skills and confidence in science and technology among youth across Canada. For twenty-five years we have focused on engaging the hardest to reach youth, including girls and Indigenous youth, and we are thrilled that the government's Innovation Agenda is focused on skills development and inclusivity," said Jennifer Flanagan, President and CEO of Actua.

Over the past two years alone, Actua has engaged over 80,000 youth in hands-on coding and computer science experiences that build digital literacy through its national Codemakers program, supported by Google Canada. This has included significant numbers of First Nations, Inuit and Metis youth, girls and young women, youth in the Arctic and youth facing other socio-economic challenges.

"Computer science is not simply the language of ones and zeroes. It's the language of creativity, entrepreneurship and Canada's future potential. Google has been a proud supporter of Actua's Codemakers program since 2014 and we're thrilled to see the federal government investing in a strong digital strategy that includes this kind of early youth engagement," said Sam Sebastian, Vice President and Managing Director of Google Canada.

Actua looks forward to further aligning our organization's work with the Government of Canada's strategy to support lifelong learning, increased diversity and digital skills development in Canada.

About Actua: Actua is Canada's leading science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach network representing 35 university and college based members. Over 5 million young Canadians have been inspired through their participation in Actua's hands on educational workshops, camps and community outreach initiatives. Each year, Actua's growing network of member organizations reach over 250,000 young Canadians in over 500

communities nationwide. At the national level Actua focuses on the engagement of underrepresented audiences through specialized programs for Indigenous youth, girls and young women, at-risk youth and youth living in Northern and remote communities. Actua's major funders include: Google Canada, Suncor Energy Foundation, the Government of Canada, GE Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Status of Women and Lockheed Martin. For more information about Actua, visit actua.ca.

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Contact Information:

Kristina Martin, Director of Communications, Actua
15 York Street, Ottawa ON K1N 5S7
Tel: (613) 234 4137 Fax: 613 234 4779