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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Memorial University student wins prestigious Prime Minister's Volunteer Award for Let's Talk Science outreach efforts in rural, remote communities.

ST. JOHN'S, NL (March 18, 2015) – Cody O'Brien, a Memorial University of Newfoundland biochemistry major and avid Let's Talk Science volunteer has been named Community Leader (Atlantic) in the 2015 Prime Minister's Volunteer Awards. The Happy Valley-Goose Bay student is one of just 17 successful award recipients chosen from 385 nominees. These prestigious awards recognize the tremendous contributions of Canadians whose volunteer efforts improve the well-being of their communities. O'Brien was presented with his award this afternoon at an official awards ceremony in Toronto, ON.

An honours student with plans to study medicine, O'Brien credits his love of science as the catalyst for his intensive volunteer efforts. It spurred him to join Let's Talk Science, a national, charitable organization that delivers science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning programs to engage children, youth and educators.

"It's a tremendous honour to receive this award," said O'Brien. "Science is a major part of my life, so science outreach was a natural fit when it came to volunteering. I understand the importance of reaching our province's youth with educational methods that really spark their interest. Using science outreach as a platform to do this is incredibly rewarding.

"As a Labradorian, I also take great pride in promoting science learning in my own community and in bringing STEM learning activities to rural and remote areas that otherwise wouldn't have this kind of access or opportunity," he added.

Glenda Casimir, manager of Volunteer Engagement & Community Partnerships at Let's Talk Science nominated O'Brien and was thrilled with the outcome. "Cody is a superstar outreach volunteer, having contributed over 250 hours leading hands-on STEM activities in both French and English at urban and rural schools across the province.

"Last year, in just one week, he engaged 1,100 Kindergarten to Grade 10 students by leading 29 workshops in three schools in Labrador!" she added. "It's mind-blowing to see the kind of impact that volunteers like Cody can have. We're so proud to count him as a member of our national Let's Talk Science Outreach team."

"Mr. O'Brien is a wonderful example of the dedicated students we have at Memorial, who are committed to sharing the knowledge they have gained with the wider community," said Dr. Gary Kachanoski, president and vice-chancellor of Memorial University. "Programs like Let's Talk Science provide invaluable opportunities for students like Mr. O'Brien to take on leadership roles throughout the province, as well as to inspire the next generation of highly skilled thinkers and doers."

The Prime Minister's Volunteer Award recipients will receive a medal, pin and certificate from the prime minister and participate in a session in which they share their achievements and exemplary practices in community leadership. As part of his award, O'Brien is also eligible to identify a not-for-profit organization to receive a \$5,000 grant.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Let's Talk Science is generously supported by Hibernia Management Development Company Ltd.

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For further information contact:

Jennifer Barnable

Communications Officer
Let's Talk Science
709.754.4330
jbarnable@letstalkscience.ca

Kelly Foss

Communications Coordinator
Faculty of Science / Marketing & Communications
Memorial University
709.864.2019
kfoss@mun.ca

**Award recipient interviews and photos available upon request.*

About Let's Talk Science:

Let's Talk Science is an award-winning, national, charitable outreach organization that creates and delivers unique learning programs and services that engage children, youth and educators in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The organization strives to prepare youth for their future careers and role as citizens in a rapidly changing world. For more information about Let's Talk Science, visit www.letstalkscience.ca.