

# **Allyson Hewitt**

**Director, SiG@MaRS and Director, Social Entrepreneurship at MaRS Discovery District**

Toronto, ON, CA

Creating the conditions that expand the realm of entrepreneurship so it incorporates a strong social component is what SiG@MaRS achieves

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## **Description**

A seasoned nonprofit leader with many social innovations to her credit, Allyson currently leads the social innovation program at MaRS that includes the creation of Social Innovation Generation (SiG@MaRS) along with partners across the country. This program develops capacity in the field of social innovation and social entrepreneurship; provides advisory services to social entrepreneurs and helps transform systems for greater impact.

Allyson comes to MaRS from SickKids where, as the Executive Director of Safe Kids Canada, she was a passionate advocate in preventing injuries to children. Prior to that, Allyson was the Executive Director of Community Information Toronto, an agency that brings people and services together. In this capacity she helped lead the development of 211, providing three-digit and online access to social service, community and government information. For this work she was awarded the Head of the Public Service Award, as sponsored by HRDC and several other prestigious awards for meritorious public service.

Allyson has been leading and volunteering in not-for-profit organizations for over 20 years, including shelters for homeless youth and battered women. Her academic background is in Criminology, Law, Public Affairs, Voluntary Sector Management and Leading Change.

She has a BA in Criminology, a degree in Law, a diploma in Public Affairs and post graduate certification in Voluntary Sector Management and Leading Change/Organizational Development.

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## **Availability**

Keynote, Moderator, Panelist, Workshop, Host/MC, Author Appearance

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## **Industry Expertise**

Non-Profit/Charitable, Fund-Raising, Social Services

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## **Topics**

Social Innovation, Social Finance, Nonprofit Management, Fundraising, Social Enterprise, Community Development, Corporate Social Responsibility, Stakeholder Engagement, Social Entrepreneurship

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## **Affiliations**

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## **Sample Talks**

### **Social Innovation Generation @ MaRS**

Allyson will share her insights and discoveries from her years at the helm of SIG@MaRS and lead the workshop in a dialogue about the broad social/economic and environmental impacts stemming from the rapidly expanding social innovation and social entrepreneurship sectors in Toronto and across Canada.

### **Social Innovation: Helping us “do good” better!**

Allyson will talk about social innovation (new ways to address old social problems), social finance (new ways of funding this important work), and social entrepreneurship (the people working to make money and make a difference).

### **Convergence Innovation**

Innovation can happen anywhere but it accelerates on the margins. With this premise in mind Allyson Hewitt, Director, Social Innovation Generation at the MaRS Discovery District or SiG@MaRS, will outline the experience of MaRS in promoting “convergence innovation”. She will describe the imperative to create a neutral space where all sectors are valued and how Canada is well positioned to not only jump on this train but to lead it.

### **Putting the Social in Ontario's Innovation Program: A Regional Story**

From multinational corporations to not-for-profit organizations to new social entrepreneurs, finding new ways to address persistent social and environmental challenges while creating value and contributing to Ontario’s economy is everybody’s business. This workshop will present information about the opportunity for collaborating on social innovation from the perspective of the academic, community, health care and industry sectors.

### **Social Finance: From Theory to Practice**

Foundations in Canada have been challenged by the Canadian Task Force on Social Finance to begin to invest more of their assets in ways that directly support their mission. This could be through program-related investments, investments in nonprofit loan funds or intermediaries, or equity investments in mission-related companies. This presentation will offer some practical examples of how innovative financing, driven by foundation investments, are making a difference in Canada.

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## **Past Talks**

### **Shared Value and what it means for the non-profit sector**

MaRS Event Series

### **Social Innovation Generation @ MaRS**

10 Carden Social Innovator Speaker Series

### **What Social Innovation Means to Durham Region**

Exploring Social Innovation in Durham

### **Panel Moderator: Meet the Entrepreneurs “Social innovation**

Entrepreneurship 101 Event Series

**KEYNOTE SPEECH: Innovation & Resilience**

Innovation & Resilience for Nonprofits: A Community Conversation & Forum

**KEYNOTE SPEECH**

Open Ottawa Libre

**Keys to the Collaborative City**

Creative Places + Spaces: The Collaborative City Conference

**On Line Collaboration Initiatives**

2012 Guelph Technology Economy Conference

**KEYNOTE SPEECH: Innovation for Community Change**

Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre Speaker Series

**Putting the Social in Ontario's Innovation Program: A Regional Story**

Ontario Centres of Excellence Discovery 12

**Panel Moderator â€“ Social Finance: From Theory to Practice**

PFC Conference â€“ Changing Philanthropy: New Visions, New Voices

**KEYNOTE SPEECH: The Social Innovation Ecosystem in Ontario**

The Association of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research Annual Conference

**Social Innovation Generation**

Open Minds Speaker Series

**Social Entrepreneurs in Action: Insights from the Front Lines**

QSB Centre for Responsible Leadershipâ€™s Discovery Learning Workshops

**HowTo.gov: Crowd-sourced Wikis in Government**

GSA's DigitalGov University Workshop Series

**People-led Policy Development**

Roadmap: 2030

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**Education**

Carleton University

BA Criminology & Corrections

Carleton University

Law

**York University**  
Graduate Certificate Voluntary Sector Management

**Algonquin College**  
Diploma (incomplete) Public Affairs

**University of Toronto**  
Graduate Certificate Leading Change

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## **Accomplishments**

**Executive Director, Safe Kids Canada, Hospital for Sick Children**

**Executive Director, Safe Kids Canada, The Hospital for Sick Children**

**Executive Director, Community Information Toronto**

**Director, Social Entrepreneurship & SiG@MaRS â€™ MaRS Discovery District**

Social Innovation Generation (SiG) is a group who believes that serious social problems can be solved. In order to nurture the health, resilience and vibrancy of our linked social, economic and ecological systems SiG will work to develop a "living laboratory" of social experiments that have the potential to achieve system change and improve the well-being of Canadians. Our aim is to search for solutions that engage the creativity and resources of all sectors.

**Steering Committee Member â€™ Ontario Centres of Excellences' Social Innovation Program**

Ontario Centres of Excellences' Social Innovation Program brings together members of Ontarioâ€™s business community with not-for-profit organizations and social enterprises to collaborate on projects that lead to innovative products, services and business models. The program is designed to build new and enhance existing partnerships between Ontario industry, academia and the not-for-profit and social enterprise sectors.

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