

Kyra Pyke invites you to attend Science Rendezvous, Kingston KRock Centre Sat 12 May 2018

## Healthy competition at Science Rendezvous

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By Dave Rideout, Communications Officer

Queen's and Heart and Stroke promote heart health through fun, family-friendly games.

On May 12, Queen's University researcher **Kyra Pyke** and the Heart and Stroke Foundation will join forces at [Science Rendezvous](#) for a heart health exhibit jam-packed with fun, educational games and activities for the whole family.

This year's displays will mark the fifth year of an ongoing partnership between the organizations designed to promote cardiovascular health research and awareness.



Queen's University and the Heart and Stroke Foundation continue to offer educational games and activities focused on heart health at Science Rendezvous. (Supplied Photo)

“Learning about cardiovascular health and establishing heart-healthy habits as early as possible is important,” says Dr. Pyke, Associate Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology in the Queen's School of Kinesiology and Health Studies. “Our joint display with the Heart and Stroke Foundation at Science Rendezvous features games designed to help both children and adults become better acquainted with how their cardiovascular system works, and to engage them with some of the interesting activities that we use to challenge the cardiovascular system in our research.”

One of the games, Cardio Hopscotch, involves a giant schematic of the cardiovascular system mapped out on the floor and divided into its parts – including the heart, lungs, veins and arteries. Children will be able to hop from one element to the next to learn how blood flows through the human body, and will be asked to hop faster or slower to reflect how quickly the blood flows at different levels of rest or activity. It will also include model 'oxygen molecules' that will have to be transported to various points as kids progress through the course.

“Physically moving around a giant map of the circulatory system really helps people visualize how their cardiovascular system and respiratory system move oxygen and other nutrients to the places in the body that need them,” says Dr. Pyke. “Cardio Hopscotch really drives the point home in two ways, because it actually gets the heart pumping while you learn.”

Another family-friendly activity will include a friendly ‘grip strength’ contest, in which participants will squeeze an automated handgrip device used by Dr. Pyke and her colleagues to investigate the effects of handgrip exercise training, which has been shown to lower blood pressure. With each squeeze, the device will display a number indicating the force participants were able to apply, and that number will then be recorded on a scoreboard throughout the day. By the time Science Rendezvous comes to a close, a winner will be declared who will leave with all the bragging rights.

In addition to an array of games, the exhibit will also feature a variety of resources to help inform and inspire families to make heart-healthy living a top priority in their lives.

“We’re very excited to partner with Dr. Pyke to promote the amazing work she and her colleagues in the cardiovascular field are doing to improve the lives of Canadians,” says Cory Watkins, Area Manager of the Heart and Stroke Foundation in Kingston. “This year, the Heart and Stroke Foundation has been very focused on our *Ms. Understood* campaign to promote women’s heart health, so it’s very fitting that our Science Rendezvous appearance falls the day before Mother’s Day – a day when families work extra hard to recognize and cherish the most important women in their lives.”

Heart disease is the leading cause of premature death for women in Canada, killing five times as many women than breast cancer. Sadly, early heart attack signs are missed in 78 per cent of women, and yet currently two-thirds of heart disease clinical research focuses on men.

“A key focus of my current research is addressing gaps in our understanding of cardiovascular function in women,” says Dr. Pyke. “It is a great pleasure to be partnering with the Heart and Stroke Foundation to promote cardiovascular health with the Kingston community at Science Rendezvous.”

Learn more about [Science Rendezvous](#), [Dr. Pyke’s research](#), and the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s [Ms. Understood](#) initiative.