
2007 Annual Report

**Toronto Green
Community**



The Toronto Green Community (TGC) is an incorporated, non-profit organization working with all sectors of the community to promote conservation through grassroots action and the development of sustainable, self-supporting, long-term initiatives that are community based.

The organization's mission is: **TO IMPROVE TORONTO BY ENGAGING ITS CITIZENS IN COMMUNITY BASED ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES**

Since 1995 the organization has designed and operated a wide array of projects dealing with environmental issues ranging from climate change to toxic wastes, atmospheric pollution to storm water management. All TGC's projects are built with four main principles in mind:

- Results oriented
- Based on grassroots community planning, input and support
- Implemented by encouraging and coordinating partnerships between different economic sectors (business, community, government, etc.)
- Designed to encourage community participation in conservation by providing multiple benefits for people, businesses and the community at large

In 2007 the organization addressed key strategic matters including the scope of the organization and governance models:

- Created the position of Volunteer Manager, to support the expansion of a volunteer program in order to expand the reach and effectiveness of the organization and increase its capacity to fulfill its new and expanded mandate.
- Installed Exceed fundraising software
- Launched a new website, www.torontogreen.ca

Awards

TGC was nominated for the 2007 City of Toronto Green Toronto Awards in the Community category.

TGC Programs

Greening Toronto's Gardens

In 2007 Phase I of the Ecological Gardening Train the Trainer manual was completed. It consisted of five ecological gardening modules;

- Ecological Gardening Basics
- Native Plant Gardening
- Troubleshooting Pests and Weeds Naturally
- Water-Friendly Gardens and Landscapes
- Natural Tree Care

The manual was distributed to over 50 community groups across Ontario with requests received internationally. Training sessions were conducted with manual recipients and volunteers. 12 volunteers were trained to deliver workshops to community groups.

Creation of Phase II of the manual was started and will consist of two modules;

- ESL in the garden and
- Container gardening – focusing on apartment buildings

Phase II will target new immigrant communities, engaging them in ecological gardening through ESL workshops.

The Great Garden Adventure, the children's gardening summer camp was run for the fourth year in 2007 in partnership with POINT (People and Organizations in North Toronto), the Central Eglinton Children's Centre and the University of Toronto's multi family housing. The program was held in three locations and 60 children learned about ecological gardening over an eight-week period.

The organization's regular programming of weekly garden workbees and ecological gardening workshops continued to be held at the Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden and at off-site locations by the train-the-trainer volunteers trained to deliver the workshops.

Food Security

TGC held a food security conference with the help of intern students from the University of Toronto's Environmental Professional Experience Course.

The Lost River Walks

The Lost River walks program (guided hikes along Toronto's buried streams and waterways) held 34 walks in 2007. The Lost River walks continue to be held in partnership with the Toronto Field Naturalists and other local groups. The Lost Rivers website, www.lostrivers.ca has a wealth of information and is accessed by people worldwide. In 2007, the website had 131,155 unique visitors and 1,049,961 hits. The organization was deeply saddened to lose one its most prized Lost River volunteers, Peter Hare in 2007. Peter had won TGC's volunteer of the decade at the organization's 10th anniversary in 2005, the volunteer of the year in 2003 and once again won the volunteer of year this year, 2007, shortly before he passed away. Peter was a walk leader and created and managed the Lost Rivers website. He will be missed, but the work he created lives on.

Speaker Series

The Toronto Green Community Speaker Series is a bimonthly program which offers an excellent opportunity for public education and outreach. The emphasis is on how to act locally to effect environmental change. In 2007 the organization held the following speaker sessions;

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
Mar 26, 2007	Greening Up your Life	JoAnne Fleming, Environmental Insights
Apr 23, 2007	Songbird Conservation	Christina Sharma, Habitat volunteer, Canadian Wildlife federation and Richard Joos, President, Toronto Bird Observatory.

May 29, 2007	Vegetarianism, the new Prius	Harold Brown, an organic farmer talking about the environmental impacts of animal agriculture.
Sept 24, 2007	If You Love This City	John Schaffter, City of Toronto
Nov 26, 2007	Giving Green	JoAnne Fleming, Environmental Insights

Solar Thermal Project

TGC worked with community members and stakeholders on a Solar Thermal Project. The goal of the program was to see the implementation of solar hot water heaters in several Toronto homes. After a series of community consultations and information sessions, a group of community members volunteered to serve on a committee which conducted research on the technology, as well as research on vendors and financing options. The goal was also to use these installations to serve as the baseline to foster ongoing community discussion, education and outreach in keeping with TGC's longstanding success in community development. However, due to the cost, five individuals instead of the anticipated 20 had solar water heaters installed in their homes. However, the very popular community meetings that had been held over the year, got people engaged and interested in the issue of renewable energy and energy conservation.

Community Energy Action Plan and Schools Energy Program

As a learning experience from the Solar Thermal Project, TGC felt, its strength was not in getting people to initiate renewable energy alternatives but more in educating the public about the critical importance of energy conservation through grassroots education.

TGC's Community Action Plan was a project to engage people in two distinct communities to reduce their energy consumption. The two communities were Lawrence Heights at Lawrence and Bathurst and the Yonge and Lawrence area. The goal of the program was to encourage participants to learn about energy conservation and act to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in their own communities by focusing on what TGC called the **five pillars of conservation: behavioural changes, transportation, home retrofits, appliance upgrades and**

green power. Children, parents and community members were engaged in an awareness-building effort to help them reduce their energy consumption.

TGC's focus for the program was on working with participants to learn about the changes they can make that are relevant to their own lives and how to make them. Community members would be encouraged to develop a sense of ownership over the project and to work together to discover ways of reducing their energy consumption.

The Schools Energy Program was an eight week program to get students in five schools in the two communities to work on their own energy conservation projects. The schools program involved almost 100 students in total. Each of the schools had to work on an energy project at the end of the program that was presented to their entire schools.

Apartment Greening at 12 Deerford Road

In 2007, in partnership with Greenwin Property Management, Toronto Green Community launched an apartment greening project in a 137-unit apartment building in North York. The 500 residents were educated about recycling and waste reduction, energy conservation, water conservation and ecological gardening. The property manager noticed results from the education when she reduced her garbage bulk bins from two to one bin.

Fundraising and Income Generating Programs

Funding

In 2007 TGC received funding from the following organizations;

- Ontario Trillium Foundation – Funding for a Volunteer Manager and to enhance TGC's volunteer program
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada's (HRSDC's) Summer Career Placement program (SCP) - Three student summer positions for a Garden coordinator, a Great Garden Adventure coordinator and Volunteer coordinator
- People and Organizations in North Toronto (POINT) – funding for the Great Garden Adventure

- Eco Action (Environment Canada) – funding for Greening Toronto’s Gardens Train the Trainer manual
- Toronto Public Health – funding for Greening Toronto’s Gardens Train the Trainer manual

Eco Gift Wrapping

For the 5th year in 2007, TGC partnered with Mountain Equipment Coop to ecologically wrap gifts for their clientele over the holiday season. The gift wrapping started on Dec 13th and went till Dec 24th. TGC wraps between 500 and 1000 gifts over the holidays. This is a great program for both recipients of the wrapping and the volunteers.

Green Tie Celebration & Fundraising Event

This event was started as a celebration of our 10th anniversary in 2005. The event is successful on many different levels including tremendous community exposure, attendance by over both members and non-members and fundraising for the organization. It also helps us build new corporate partnerships. This year, the organization published an online holiday guide to correspond with the event as well as holiday bookmarks with holiday tips to give away to guests. The 3rd annual gala was held on Tuesday November 27, 2007 at Alleycatz Restaurant with our very popular eco silent auction. The guest of honour at the gala was the Gord Miller, Ontario’s Environmental Commissioner. There was also an eco fashion show with designs from the Queen Street West store, pre-loved and the evening also included 15 eco vendors selling their wares at the gala. Awards were also presented to volunteer of the year (Peter Hare) and funder of the year (Sandie Benitah).

Individual Giving

Toronto Green Community is very fortunate to have members and donors who support the organization. In 2007, \$15,000 of the organization’s revenue came from individual supporters.

Outreach Activities

The Internet

Toronto Green Community's new website, www.torontogreen.ca was launched in November 2007 to coincide with the annual gala. It replaced TGC's original website www.ntgc.ca. The www.lostrivers.ca website had 13,000 unique visitors and 89,000 hits in 2007. The Lost Rivers website, www.lostrivers.ca which runs separately from TGC's main website, continues to operate and had over 130,000 unique visitors and almost 1,050,000 million hits in 2007.

Tabling Displays

In 2007, TGC made special efforts to attend events that were more geographically dispersed across Toronto and trained more volunteers to carry out outreach at these events. Following is a list of events the organization had displays and outreach at;

Environment Days across the city (20)

The University of Toronto Job Fair

The Green Living Show

Framework Foundation Timeraiser

Green on the Grange

Junction Arts Festival

Vegetarian Food Festival

St. Clement's Church Eco-Fair

Granite Club Environmental Fair

Mom2Mom Green Holiday Show

Volunteers

TGC has always relied on volunteers for their passion, vision and dedication to our programs and activities. Volunteers lead Lost River walks, maintain the Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden and naturalization site, deliver garden workshops and wrap gifts at Mountain Equipment Coop as part of TGC's holiday fundraiser. They perform administrative tasks in the TGC office and do outreach at information booths at events. They create graphics for program material as well as write and edit program material and they are involved in every aspect of the organization.

TGC was also fortunate to be partnered with the Framework Foundation Timeraiser and the University of Toronto Environmental Professional Experience Student Volunteer Placement course, both organizations which provide TGC with valuable volunteers. TGC also attracts volunteers to the organization from postings on several volunteer websites; Goodworks, Volunteer Toronto and TRCA (Toronto Regional and Conservation Authority). TGC keeps its volunteers posted through a volunteer email listserv.

In 2007, over 150 volunteers donated over 2000 hours of their time to the Toronto Green Community.

Looking Forward

In 2008 TGC will continue its efforts to becoming a truly Toronto wide organization and TGC will reach out to more sectors within Toronto. In 2008, the board will work on the organization's next Strategic Plan which will steer the organization for the next five years, 2008 - 2013.

Board of Directors

Board elected at the 2007 Annual General Meeting

Chair:

Marc Rose

Vice-Chair:

Harold Smith* (replaced by Tawnya Hallman)

Secretary-Treasurer:

Josh Matlow

Board Members:

Dan Adirim

Ron Fletcher*

Ellen Giles

Tawnya Hallman

Yunis Kariuki

Erin Klein*

Meghan O'Keefe*

Jaye Robinson*

Melissa Tkachyk

*Board Members resigned in 2007