



annual report
2008



WHO WE ARE

Toronto Green Community is a grassroots organization that educates and engages communities in local action for a cleaner, greener Toronto.

OUR MISSION is to engage Torontonians in environmental initiatives where they live, work and play.

OUR VISION is for people to live in sustainable communities with: clean air and water, abundant green spaces, local, organic food, and minimal waste.

2008 HIGHLIGHTS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Our dedicated board of directors took time out of the lazy, hazy days of summer to plan for TGC's future. The result is a comprehensive five year plan to grow and strengthen the organization, a new vision and mission statement, and the development of five core pillar areas – water, energy, green spaces, waste and food – on which to focus our programming. TGC will continue to develop new partnerships in a variety of communities in order to become a truly Toronto wide organization.

LOGO CHANGE

After thirteen years with our logo of little houses, trees and shops, we realized that it was time for an update. We recruited graphic design volunteers to create options and in September 2008 we chose a unique design by Moon McCleery. The new logo depicts water, energy, nature and community, reflecting TGC's values.

PROGRAMS

SPEAKER SERIES

TGC continues to present speakers on a range of environmental issues.

APRIL 2008

Four contributors to Coach House Books' "GreenTOpia: Towards a Sustainable Toronto", led a panel discussion on water in the city – its ravine system, changing water bodies and creeks – and ideas for improving Toronto's water future.

NOVEMBER 2008

A panel discussion entitled "HTO: The Future of Toronto's Water", featured the contributors to Coach House Books' "HTO: Toronto's Water from Lake Iroquois to Lost Rivers to Low-flow Toilets", about the future of Toronto's water resources and waterways.

GREENING TORONTO'S GARDENS

COMMUNITY GARDEN

TGC's long term commitment to improving the environmental quality of Toronto's green space continued in 2008. At Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden, we hosted our weekly garden workbees and eco-gardening workshops. Similar workshops were also offered at other locations.

GREAT GARDEN ADVENTURE (GGA)

Building on our success of prior years, we held the Great Garden Adventure, a twice weekly children's gardening program run in partnership with POINT (People and Organizations in North Toronto), at the Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden. We also brought the GGA program to Charles Street Family Housing at the University of Toronto, the Chester Le Community Centre in Scarborough, and to Lotherton in Lawrence Heights.

SAN LORENZO

Through our partnership with the San Lorenzo Latin American Community Centre, we participated in the growth of their community garden, a project that combines environmentalism and social outreach at this centre that serves the Hispanic community.

TRAIN THE TRAINER MANUAL

In 2007, TGC produced a manual to train volunteers to help communities learn how to start their own community garden. Building on the five modules of the manual created in the previous year, in 2008 we drafted an additional two modules – Container Gardening, and ESL in the Garden. We piloted the ESL (English as a second language) module in our very own garden with enthusiastic students from ACE (Advantage Centres for English) who greatly appreciated the opportunity.

APARTMENT GREENING

TGC's commitment to improving Toronto's environment continued with its Apartment Greening project. TGC joined with tenants at an apartment building at 12 Deerford Road, engaging them on issues including energy and water conservation, recycling and waste reduction. TGC also worked with the residents to create a community butterfly garden. Initial steps were taken to offer the same program to other multi-residential buildings through a partnership with Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

LOST RIVERS PROJECT

TGC, in partnership with The Toronto Field Naturalists and other community sponsors, continues to develop and promote the Lost Rivers Project through its guided walk series, website and a new field guide. From spring through autumn 2008, guided walks of buried rivers and streams featured sites of historic or natural interest with added insight into Toronto's water issues.

COMMUNITY ENERGY ACTION PLAN

With funding from the Ministry of Energy's Community Conservation Initiatives Program, TGC embarked on a pilot project designed to increase awareness and action on energy conservation. Two Toronto communities with contrasting socio-economic profiles were chosen, to better determine needs and effectiveness of approach. In each community we ran two programs: a school based lunch program for grades 4 to 6 students which successfully engaged them in energy conservation issues; and a series of eight community workshops designed to educate community members on conservation and green energy choices. They received very positive feedback and workshop attendance increased over time implying a growing momentum as the project unfortunately ended.



You were likely to bump into TGC throughout the year at one of the many outreach events we attended including: U of T Career Fair, Conservation Council of Ontario's Conservation Fair, Green Toronto Festival, Brickwork's Seedy Saturdays, Green on the Grange Festival, and the Vegetarian Food Fair.

JACK JOHNSON TOUR

TGC was one of four organizations in Ontario asked to participate in the "All At Once" tour by folk artist and environmentalist, Jack Johnson. On August 3, 2008 TGC volunteers attended Mr. Johnson's concert, setting up a booth and spreading TGC's environmental message. TGC created a short video that was uploaded onto the All At Once website and viewed all over the world. Each viewing garnered TGC a \$1 donation. Through this participation we raised \$2,500 and received \$3,000 from the Jack Johnson Foundation in matching donations.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

TGC held its Fall Harvest Fundraiser in October, 2008. The event was focused on the theme of organic and local foods and their impact on food security, the health of the planet and its peoples. Guest speakers were Jamie Kennedy, local celebrated chef and environmental and local food advocate, and Wayne Roberts, writer and authority on world food issues. Silent auction items donated by environmentally friendly businesses and a door prize added to the interest and success of the event.

ECO-GIFT WRAPPING

For the fifth year running we again partnered with Mountain Equipment Coop to deliver our Eco-Gift Wrapping program. This event engages many volunteers, spreads a positive environmental message, and adds to the profile of TGC. It is also a successful fundraiser, with generous donations received from patrons.

NEWSLETTERS

This year saw the publication of two themed and informative newsletters, which were distributed to our membership and offered to the public through community and business venues. The Spring 2008 edition featured "Eco Living", and included articles on making ethical consumer choices, greening our cleaning and grooming supplies, buying organics and making personal contributions to the environment. This Newsletter was followed in the fall with an issue dedicated to Food, and featured articles on topics ranging from the environmental imperative of reducing beef consumption, to the positive impact of buying local, to the joys of raising chickens in one's back yard.

DIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In August 2008, TGC held its first networking meeting focussing on Diversity, Inclusion and the Environment to encourage inter-sectoral collaboration of community groups and environmental organizations. By providing this platform for dialogue, we hope to reach a very wide, diverse audience in the GTA through participating groups.

In partnership with Volunteer Toronto, TGC held an information session at Skills for Change encouraging newcomers to become more involved in their community as active volunteers, highlighting opportunities in the environmental sector.



Our Volunteers

TGC was very fortunate to have received an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant for its volunteer program. Paula Messina was hired in the summer of 2008 as the volunteer manager and has since grown the volunteer program tremendously.

TGC engages numerous volunteers in fulfilling its projects and initiatives. Our volunteers in 2008 included: gardeners at Eglinton Park and San Lorenzo community gardens; assistance at our office with research, writing, marketing, planning, organizing, administration and program coordination; editors, writers, graphic designers for our newsletters and website; coordinators and wrappers for our Eco-Gift Wrapping program; event planners, promoters, ticket sellers and buyers for our Fall Fundraiser; outreach ambassadors; walk leaders and organizers for Lost Rivers, and many more.

In May 2008, TGC hosted a Volunteer Recognition Event where volunteers, old and new, mingled and shared their experiences. We are incredibly lucky to be the recipient of the time and dedication of so many individuals who share the vision of a greener Toronto.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VERY SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS!!!

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Marc Rose, **Chair**
Tawnya Hallman, **Vice-Chair**
Nir Besser, **Treasurer**
Ellen Giles
Muthoni Yunis Kariuki
Oren Halperin
Jacqueline Briggs
Tony Genco

OUR STAFF:

Minaz Asani-Kanji, **Executive Director**
Paula Messina, **Volunteer Manager**
Edward Nagato, **Garden Coordinator**
Ashlee Cooper, **Garden and Train-the-Trainer coordinator**
Whitney Crooks, **Community Energy Action Plan Program Manager**
Rehana Aziz, **Community Energy Action Plan Community Coordinator**



In 2008 we received funding from the following organizations:

Ontario Trillium Foundation
Human Resource Development Canada's (HRDC's) Summer Career Placement program.
People and Organizations in North Toronto (POINT).
Eco Action.
Toronto Public Health
Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

Other sources of revenue included donations, membership fees and newsletter advertising revenue.



Entrance to TGC's Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden





Toronto
Green
Community



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