

Annual Report

2009



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
- Local, Organic Food,
- Abundant Green Spaces, and
- Minimal Waste.

Programs

Apartment Greening

A very successful initiative this past year was a pilot program in partnership with Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) – Toronto’s largest landlord. Built upon our successes with private landlords and the City of Toronto in previous years, the objective of the ‘Apartment Greening Project,’ with TCHC was to encourage waste reduction and increase recycling levels in a high-rise building in Etobicoke.

The success of the program was due to the combined effort of: TGC, tenant volunteers, the resident steward, Somali tenant animators, and property management. Education was carried out through meetings with tenants, door to door encounters, activities for children, lobby events, and clear signage in the lobbies and common building areas.

The end result was an impressive increase of 113% in recycling with a 29% garbage waste reduction, a winning outcome for TGC, TCHC, the tenants, and the planet!

Lost River Walks

This key TGC program continued to flourish under the vision and dedication of extraordinary volunteers. In partnership with other local groups, the TGC provides guided hikes along the buried stream paths in Toronto. In 2009, the Lost River Walks project coordinated approximately 50 walks. In addition to actually mapping the streams and waterways buried by urban development in the city, and taking people on a fascinating historical and ecological journey, lostrivers.ca provides an outstanding reservoir of information for the likes of city officials and anyone interested in water-related issues.

Eco-Gift Wrapping

This past holiday season, TGC once again held its widely popular annual Eco Gift-Wrapping Program. This year the program, which has been running successfully at Mountain Equipment Coop for six years, was expanded to two new locations: Yonge Eglinton Centre, and BMV Books on Bloor. Over one hundred and fifty TGC volunteers were recruited, trained, and organized into shifts. During two weeks in December, these volunteers wrapped gifts using 100% recycled kraft paper or by reusing posters donated by arts and community organizations. To avoid using tape, parcels were tied together and decorated with coloured paper raffia. Shoppers showed their appreciation for TGC’s eco-friendly gift wrapping alternative with generous donations. More importantly, TGC’s volunteers were able to share with consumers the message of reducing holiday waste in a creative and sustainable way.

Programs cont'd

EcoDriver

EcoDriver is a program of Green Communities Canada delivered locally by TGC and funded by Natural Resources Canada. The EcoDriver project encourages emission reductions by promoting three core messages: drive fuel-efficiently, buy fuel-efficiently, and drive less. TGC's EcoDriver activities in 2009 included tire pressure blitzes, information displays, partnership development, local media, and numerous presentations to workplace and community groups.

Garden Programs

Community Garden and Naturalization Site

Our Community Garden and Naturalization Site continue to be central to our effort to increase green spaces in our community. Each year, a diverse group of volunteers unite to learn and teach and share ideas about eco-friendly gardening. A healthy harvest of organic food was produced and the neighbourhood enjoyed Garden tours and garden workshops that were held throughout the summer. The garden fosters a sense of community and serves as an example of what is possible with a little imagination and a lot of hard work by community members united by a common vision.

ESL in the Garden

TGC helped combine gardening with ESL (English as a Second Language) lessons for newcomers in the Parkdale community, by piloting our new ESL in the Garden Manual at Greenest City's HOPE garden.

Great Garden Adventure

Children participating in TGC's Great Garden Adventure (GGA) program learn about ecological gardening through hands-on lessons, nature themed games, and eco-crafts. Weekly themes and topics include organic vegetable gardening, seed germination, worm composting, birds and beneficial insects.

For the fifth consecutive year TGC partnered with POINT (People and Organizations in North Toronto) at the Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden to deliver the GGA program to 3-4 year olds on Tuesdays, and 5-7 year olds on Thursdays. The program was offered to the public free of charge and lasted two hours per week, for eight weeks.

We also continued our partnership with the University of Toronto's Student Family Housing Community Development office, offering a four week ecological gardening program for children ages 5-9. The program was hosted at the 35 Charles Street residence in the lovely Ellen Giles Rooftop Garden.

Programs cont'd

Great Garden Adventure cont'd

In 2009, TGC also delivered the GGA to children in two priority neighborhoods:

1) Chester Le Community Corner in Scarborough

With the support of Chester Le Community Corner staff, TGC designed and delivered a four week eco-gardening program for 6-8 year olds enrolled in the Corner's summer camp. TGC designed games to help the children to plant and learn the names of vegetables growing in the community garden at Chester Le Park. The children also made attractive plant labels out of salvaged floppy disks.

2) Lotherton Summer Camp

With the support of North York Community House and camp staff, TGC planned and delivered two one-day programs at the Joyce Public School, where the summer camp was hosted. The children learned about the lifecycle of plants, how to identify common vegetable seeds and native trees, and even had the chance to germinate their own adzuki, alfalfa, amaranth, kamut and radish.

Speaker Series

TGC's Speaker Series is a program which offers an excellent opportunity for public education and outreach. The emphasis is on how to act locally to effect environmental change. In 2009, the organization held the following speaker series sessions:

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKERS
March 2 nd , 2009	Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada	Jennifer Foulds Cheryl Teelucksingh Beenash Jafri Ben Powless Damien Lee
June 25 th , 2009	Local Food Issues	Matt Kennedy Lesley Stoyan

Diversity Initiatives

Environment & Diversity Network

The objective of the Environment & Diversity Network is to promote and support community initiatives that link environmental issues to poverty, marginalization and social exclusion by fostering a cross-sectoral network and offering workshops that encourage partnership development, experience sharing, and capacity building.

In 2009, TGC coordinated two meetings of its Environment & Diversity Network:

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKERS
January 13	Reaching culturally diverse audiences: examples from national environmental organizations. Results from community consultations: Earth Day Canada Accessibility Report on the barriers that traditionally marginalized communities face when accessing the environmental movement	Merebeth Switzer, Ducks Unlimited Canada Cheryl Gudz and Josh Stevenson, Earth Day Canada
March 31	What's happening in the community? – Organizations share their initiatives...	Low Income Energy Network - Franz Hartmann FutureWatch - Lidia Ferreira Maytree Foundation - Mona ElSayed Clean Air Foundation - Fatima Dharsee Live Green Toronto – Mike Peppard

Environment & Diversity Advisory Council

The Sustainability Network's Environment & Diversity Project is a four-year collaborative initiative designed to help the Ontario environmental NGO community consider, develop and implement strategies to better reflect and engage under-represented communities. TGC sits on the Advisory Council which provides the project collaborative with advice and resources. Meetings of this group also help build networks between groups to share learnings at a larger scale.

Outreach Activities

In an effort to promote TGC's work on vital environmental issues to more people across the city, we participated in the following events:

- Apple Tree Market Launch
- Warden Woods Festival
- Live Green Toronto Festival
- Vegetarian Food Fair
- Fairlawn Healthy Living Fair
- Planet in Focus

Outreach to Newcomers

In 2009, TGC continued reaching out to newcomers in Toronto in a variety of ways:

- offering presentations on environmental issues to ESL/LINC classes
- recruiting and engaging newcomers as volunteers on a variety of levels
- developing an ESL in the Garden Manual to assist newcomers learning English as a Second Language while sharing knowledge of ecological growing customs
- recruiting new Board members through Maytree's Diverse City on Board program
- attending the Diversity Forum hosted by the Clean Air Foundation

In the media

TGC programs and volunteers were profiled in the media on several occasions in 2009 in a variety of outlets including Tandem News, Inside Toronto, and Fairchild Television Ltd.

Fundraising

In 2009, TGC received funding from:

- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Human Resource Development Canada's (HRDC) Summer Career Placements
- City of Toronto in partnership with People & Organizations in North Toronto
- Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

Other sources of revenue included Income Generating Programs, corporate and individual donations, membership fees, and newsletter advertising revenue.

Fundraising cont'd

Maxwell House

Maxwell House awarded Toronto Green Community a generous \$10,000.00 donation through its 'Brew Some Good' Search for Canada's do-gooders. Consequently, TGC was able to expand its Community Garden Program, and bring its Great Garden Adventure to children in two priority neighborhoods by joining with local community groups. Additionally, TGC helped combine gardening with ESL (English as a Second Language) lessons by piloting our new ESL in the Garden Manual.

GREENtuity

In celebration of Earth Week in 2009, a group of volunteers came together to raise funds for the TGC through a new initiative they titled GREENtuity. The concept was launched at Pistachio, an eco-friendly gift store and apothecary, on April 16th with a well-attended media event.

GREENtuity – 'a tip to the environment' - allowed patrons of participating businesses the opportunity to make a donation at their time of purchase. Over fifteen green and local businesses participated in the event helping to raise funds and awareness for TGC and the environment. We appreciate the support of all participants!

Financials

	2009	2008
Revenue		
Grant Revenue	18,767	84,132
Donation Income	17,685	12,311
Program Revenue	15,320	6,965
Membership Revenue	-	1,275
Interest and Other Income	102	632
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	51,874	105,315
Expenses		
Salaries and Contracts	30,914	77,367
General and Administration	17,645	17,158
Program Expenses	5,717	10,972
Amortization	2,886	2,812
Insurance	2,060	2,060
Professional Fees	1,845	2,490
Advertising and Promotion	634	638
Membership Expenses	110	930
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	61,811	114,427
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Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue Over Expenses	(9,937)	(9,112)

**Audited Financial Statements available on request*

Volunteers

TGC relies on the dedication and hard work of countless volunteers on a daily basis to run our programs and to keep the organization in operation. There are so many volunteers who deserve a special mention that we cannot list them here, but on October 29th we held our annual Volunteer Recognition Event to let all of our volunteers know how much they are appreciated!

Our volunteers in 2009 played key roles in: gardening at Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden, administration, research, writing, marketing, website maintenance, program planning & coordination, organizing, editing, graphic design, eco-friendly gift wrapping, fundraising, event planning, outreach, leading and organizing Lost River Walks, and much more. We are incredibly fortunate to be the recipient of the time and dedication of so many individuals who share the vision of a greener Toronto.

Also, in 2009, TGC hosted an international volunteer student through Red Leaf Student Programs for an eight week placement focused on the Great Garden Adventure program.

Board of Directors

Marc Rose, Chair

Ellen Giles

Nir Besser, Treasurer

Muthoni Yunis Kuriuki

Jennifer Kellie

Edward Nagato

Imran Noorani

Whitney Crooks

In 2009, TGC registered with Board Match and Maytree Foundation's Diverse City on Board to assist with board member recruitment.

Our Staff

Minaz Asani-Kanji, Executive Director

Paula Messina, Co-Director

Ping Ya-Lee, Garden Programs Coordinator

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