

ABOUT ECOSOURCE

Ecosource is an Ontario-based environmental education non-profit serving youth, adults, and families. Our work began in 1979 in Mississauga and has expanded throughout the Region of Peel and beyond.

We are all about changing the world, right in our own backyard! Our staff works in schools and throughout the community, delivering interactive learning experiences that inspire youth and adults to take actions that make a huge difference to the health of the planet. Ecosource programs focus on important environmental topics including waste reduction, teacher education, youth leadership, sustainability education, local food in schools, community gardens and urban agriculture.

We believe that when people realize how much impact their daily choices have on our environment, they will choose to become better environmental citizens. And we believe that most people are ready and willing to make those changes - they just need information and support. Our vision is to move public attitudes and perceptions about environmental issues toward responsible personal action, while inspiring personal accountability for the viability of the planet!

To learn more, visit us at www.ecosource.ca or call 905.274.6222.

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Ecosource
Meadowvale South Recreation Centre, 2nd Fl.
6600 Falconer Dr. Mississauga, ON L5N 1M2

 ecosource.ca

 905.274.6222

 /EcosourceGreen

 @EcosourceGreen

 info@ecosource.ca

 905.858.8927

 @EcosourceGreen

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2014-2015 HIGHLIGHTS



91.5% OF STUDENTS AND FAMILY PARTICIPANTS felt half or more of their bodies were engaged in active play during ReRooted in Play sessions



4,700 WASTELESS LUNCHES packed by schools in our waste reduction programs, reducing food waste



176 SQ. METRES OF ASPHALT DEPAVED in Peel's first Depave Paradise Project



29% REDUCTION IN GARBAGE produced among participating schools, sending less garbage to landfill over the school year



6,000 HOURS CONTRIBUTED to community food growing for local food banks and to steward our 6 public food growing sites



820 NATIVE TREES & SHRUBS PLANTED at PEYA's Region-Wide Stewardship Day



3,000+ STUDENTS ENGAGED IN 141 EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS focused on food literacy and sustainable food systems



58 EDUCATORS FROM 40 SCHOOLS across Peel Region, the GTA, and beyond benefited from our Teacher Education Course

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40,000+

students, teachers, and community members reached through Ecosource environmental education programs in the past year.



PEYA Executive and Advisory Committee members pose for the camera at the 2014 PEYA Summer Leadership Training Retreat. Photo taken by Tooba Shakeel.



The 2014 Community Cultivators and community members enjoy the afternoon planting our new habitat garden at the Parkway Green Generation Garden. Photo taken by Aarathi Edward.



Photo by Rob Beintema
Courtesy of The Mississauga News



“ For me, it is a way to continue learning about gardening, staying healthy, giving back to my community, reducing stress, sharing, participating, and being a part of a really important movement.

- Tara B.,
Community Cultivator



COMMUNITY GARDENS & URBAN AGRICULTURE

Increasing access to fresh, healthy local food and sustainable food growing education across the city.

Our Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture programs continue to grow, engaging more than **4,000 families and community members** in learning about sustainable food at our **6 public community food growing sites** and at events across Peel Region!

In 2014 Ecosource launched an exciting new 5 year community gardening collaboration with the City of Mississauga to connect residents in Mississauga neighbourhoods with gardening spaces that encourage active, healthy living and help green the city! During the 2014 growing season Ecosource helped launch **2 new neighbourhood garden projects** in Mississauga at the Art Gallery of Mississauga and Castlebridge Public School. Ecosource also worked with the community to plan for the expansion of

the Hillside Park Community Garden in Clarkson (Spring 2015) and the launch of a brand new public community garden at Forestglen Park in the Dixie-Bloor neighbourhood (coming Fall 2015). Our 2014 **ReRooted in Play** program engaged **1,156 participants** in physically active family fun in the garden and provided a unique recreational opportunity in public community gardens across the city. Our **Community Cultivators** program allowed participants to gain hands-on gardening skills while giving back to their communities. These dedicated volunteer leaders with a passion for community building and food growing, contributed **over 400 volunteer hours** throughout the season.

Our Mississauga Sustainable Urban Agriculture program launched an exciting **#GrownInMississauga** initiative in 2014. We connected with local farmer's markets and engaged residents in discussions about a local and sustainable food system in our city. We have also launched a new **Seed to Fork** education program in partnership with the Community Learning Kitchen at Eden Food For Change. Through our partnership with Stephen Lewis Secondary and Applewood School, we engaged students to grow and care for over **400 vegetable seedlings** for our community gardens in their greenhouse.



The experience of the WasteWatchers program was a positive one for our students. They have so many opportunities to show their leadership skills through the various activities offered. ...The program was fun and hands-on for the students.

- Grade 3 Teacher, Thornwood P.S.



WASTE REDUCTION EDUCATION

Reducing waste and greening school cultures through hands-on workshops, school-wide action campaigns, and proactive waste reduction programs!

Our elementary and secondary school-based waste reduction workshops investigate contemporary waste issues from a global and local perspective. From becoming “recycling heroes” in our Kindergarten workshop to exchanging thought-provoking ideas about food waste issues in our secondary workshops, these curriculum-linked lessons have engaged **13,788 students and 621 teachers** to discover actions they can take to address waste in their schools, community, and beyond!

Through whole-school, action-oriented campaigns and initiatives, Ecosource’s **Green Schools Program** supports students and teachers in greening school culture and practices. This year we partnered with 9 elementary schools, engaging over **4,200 students** and **over 400 teachers** in school-wide waste audits,

student led recycling campaigns, wasteless lunch challenges, and more! An **average reduction of 28% in total garbage produced** was reached among Green Schools!

Our whole-school WasteWatchers Program reached **3,315 students and 263 staff** at 5 intermediate and secondary schools. Hands-on training and mentorship provided **168 student leaders** with skills and tools to carry out waste reduction initiatives in collaboration with staff leaders. Through waste audits, campaigns, and workshops, the program targeted school-specific issues such as recycling, paper and plastic use, and food waste. Participants packed wasteless lunches and promoted refillable water bottles, proper recycling, and paper reduction. With hard work and determination, WasteWatcher schools **reduced their garbage on average by 26%**!

Ecosource also offered waste reduction support to schools through partnering with the City of Mississauga’s Green Chair Program, and provided Peel schools with Whole-School Waste Campaign Kits. Through these initiatives, an additional **18,839 school community members** were engaged in waste-focused action campaigns!

TEACHER EDUCATION

Offering teachers the support and resources needed to increase sustainability practices in Peel Region schools.

For the sixth year running, Ecosource and York University’s Faculty of Education partnered to provide educators with a unique professional development opportunity through our **Teacher Certificate Course**. Focused on Environmental and Sustainability Education, the program offered three 2-day modules filled with practical learning tools, resources, and techniques focused on whole school approaches to educating for sustainability.

Meaningful hands-on education built capacity for educators to integrate environmental action and education into the classroom and throughout their schools. Over three modules, **58 educators from 40 schools** across the Region of Peel, the Greater Toronto Area, and beyond graduated from the Ecosource-York University Certificate Course: Approaches to Educating for Sustainability.

Bringing Peel educators and community partners the latest in environmental teaching resources, techniques, events, and opportunities, our **Trailblazers Online Newsletter** was **distributed over 4,700 times** this past year alone!



Really looking forward to utilizing the information and resources to enhance the student’s understanding and involvement in their own education in eco-sustainability.

- Teacher Education Course Participant



Excellent mix of theory and practice. Meaningful discussions that were critical and thought provoking.

- Teacher Education Course Participant





“Simply put, the Peel Environmental Youth Alliance program has had a significant impact on my career, and I would not be where I am today without it.”

- Rohit M., PEYA Alumni

“It is really hard to engage our students and have them make connections between theory and real life. ... Thanks so much!”

- Culinary Arts Teacher, Oshawa Central

YOUTH ACTION

A network of 900+ action-oriented students in Peel Region concerned about environmental issues and determined to make positive change!

The Peel Environmental Youth Alliance (PEYA) is a youth-led, youth-run organization supported by Ecosource. Every year, remarkable youth aged 13-24 come together from all across Peel to bridge the gap between youth-adult environmental actions.

PEYA provides a platform to environmental clubs, classrooms and youth organizations to collaborate and create hands-on solutions to pressing local environmental issues. Through on-going leaderships training, PEYA youth develop skills to lead their own exciting projects and carry their learning forward toward creating sustainable environmental change in their communities.

Here are the highlights of our 2014-15 projects:

The popular **Annual Region-Wide Stewardship Day** continued with **235 students and teachers** from all

across Peel braving the cold spring weather to restore habitats and planted **820 native trees and shrubs**. Throughout the day, participants learned about local ecosystems and biodiversity while connecting with 5 local natural areas in Peel.

261 students and teachers were buzzing with excitement at the **EcoBuzz Conference** hosted at Fletcher’s Meadow Secondary School. Participants learned about food security, waste reduction, cycling in Peel, sustainable transportation, and much more! Students and teachers enjoyed the opportunity to network with each other while engaging in dialogue to promote hands-on environmental change in schools.

Nine teams of youth from across Peel competed in a fast-paced quest for sustainable leadership at this year’s **Amazing Green Race: Green Quest**. Using strategic planning, cooperation and their knowledge of sustainability issues, teams raced from station to station completing activities that focused on water conservation, waste management, sustainable transportation, bicycle safety and much more!

LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOLS

Delivering food literacy and food systems education to students and teachers and putting this learning into action by purchasing more local food in schools.

Our Youth and Local Food programs have initiated food systems change in schools within Peel Region and across Ontario! Over the past year these programs have supported **34 schools and 141 educators** through **124 workshops and events** reaching more than **3,000 students** across Ontario.

Ecosource partnered with the Durham District School board and their cafeteria service provider, Chartwells (a division of Compass Canada), to deliver the **Cafeteria Connects: Bringing Ontario Foods to Secondary School Cafeterias** project which aims to provide food system education and opportunities to support local agriculture in Durham secondary schools.

In September 2014 this group launched the **Big 6 Purchasing Strategy**, a first-ever cafeteria purchasing strategy that focuses on 6 locally sourced, Ontario produced fruits and vegetables to be used in all cafeterias during the school year. We also released **Classroom Connects**, a teacher-created curriculum guide focusing on local food in business, family studies, geography, hospitality and science for educators to integrate local food into classroom learning.

Ecosource’s new **Alternative Avenues to Local Food Procurement in Schools** project builds on these successes, working with schools and community partners in **Peel, Durham, Thunder Bay and York Region** to explore ways for secondary school hospitality programs and student nutrition programs to engage with local food systems.

Successful pilot projects to date have included school membership in local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Programs as well as monthly local food meals in partnership with farmers and much more!



BEFORE Depave
Decommissioned basketball court



AFTER Depave
Serenity Court garden, pathway



SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION CENTRE

Place-based education working to inspire and support community action to improve our environment with a focus on local food systems, waste reduction, water conservation and alternative energy solutions.

The 2014-2015 program year saw our Sustainability Education Centre put down deeper roots in the Streetsville/Meadowvale community with record levels of community engagement!

Our Centre has become a hub of environmental learning in the community through the expansion of our on-site demonstrations to include a solar photovoltaic installation, a hydroponic vertical farming pilot project, and mobile sub-irrigated container gardens.

We have also worked to promote sustainability in our community through collaborating on the creation of a Food Charter for Peel Region and completing Peel's first-ever Depave Paradise pilot project with Russet Homes Cooperative and the TRCA SNAP program. Together we removed **176 square metres of asphalt** and replaced it with permeable pavement and native plants to soak up rain where it falls and reduce flooding.



My students were all 100% engaged in the activities. The teaching met them where they were on their learning journey. ...I think the program helped develop their understanding of themselves as global citizens, and I hear their desire to be less wasteful come out in their conversations.



- Nicole B., Grade 5 Teacher, Thorn Lodge P.S.



It's interesting to see a wick soak up water into the roots of a pea plant. Everything was so fun. I never did something like that before.

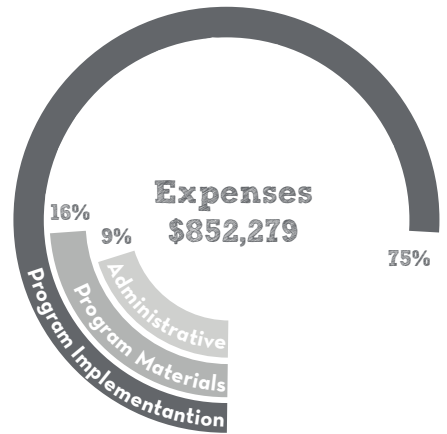
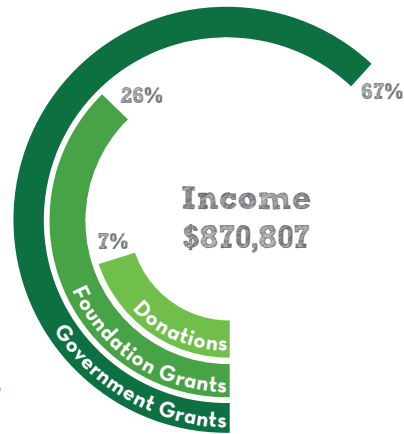


- Jaidah, Grade 3 Student, Fairview P.S.

Produce grown and harvested from the Iceland Teaching Garden ready to be donated to local food banks. Photo taken by Bonnie Scott.

Sowing the seeds of CARE

We couldn't accomplish this great work without the support of many donors and partners across the community. Thank you!



Funders (\$1,000+)

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