



## 2024 Green Community Award Winners Announced

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*For Immediate Release*

The votes have been tabulated and Green Communities Canada (GCC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2024 Green Community Awards. The awards celebrate excellence in the GCC national network and were presented on 9 May.

### **Award winners:**

#### **Green Community Member of the Year - Rideau Environmental Action League**

A longstanding Green Communities Canada Member organization, the Rideau Environmental Action League has been a respected environmental voice and a consistent presence in Smith Falls, ON. For the past 35 years it has undertaken small-scale, local, hands-on projects that show residents they can take environmental action and make a difference.

#### **Award criteria**

For an organization that demonstrates innovation in programming, partnerships and marketing, and successful local community (businesses, households) or broader transformation (policy, government).

#### **Environmental Lifetime Achievement Award - Cindy Toth, Halton Environmental Network**

Cindy is a tireless advocate for environmental sustainability. During her 30+ years of work in municipal public service she developed crucial environmental policies including the Town of Oakville's Health Protection Air Quality By-Law, and implemented the Town's sustainable purchasing and zero waste procedures. Cindy was also instrumental in the development of Oakville's first Climate Change Strategy.

As Vice-Chair of the Halton Environmental Network's (HEN) Board of Directors, Cindy has tirelessly supported HEN leadership, represented the organization at countless meetings, and is always ready to roll up her sleeves, earning her the title of *Mother HEN*.

### **Award criteria**

For an individual in our Green Communities who demonstrates, through work and achievements, a lifetime contribution to improving the environment and/or climate action in their community (can be staff, board, volunteer).

### **Social Equity Award - Halton Environmental Network**

The Halton Environmental Network (HEN) is recognized for its work to support and propel an extensive list of community social equity initiatives, including:

- the Debewin Truth and Reconciliation Project
- Grandmother's Voice
- the Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable
- gardening and educational programming with the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton
- partnering with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation on numerous events and initiatives, amplifying voice and teachings
- supporting Kayanase, an ecological restoration and native plant and seed business, on Six Nations, buying their plants and seeds and using them across our community in schools, faith-based organizations, and community gardens.
- partnering with Miziwe Biik, an Aboriginal employment training organization, and employing team members to support HEN administration and programming
- Greening Sacred Spaces where they work with faith-based organizations on retrofits, depave programs, and rain gardens
- elevating youth voices for climate action through their Generation Green program.

### **Award criteria**

This award is for an organization or individual that has taken meaningful steps and actions to further equity and diversity within their organization, community and/or the sector.

### **Outstanding Staff Person Award - Lisa Truong, Reep Green Solutions**

Lisa is commended for translating intention into action by expanding and championing Reep Green Solutions' programs in the community.

Lisa was integral in designing a home energy efficiency financing program for Waterloo Region to address energy poverty; was the driving force behind including information in the top five unofficial mother-tongue languages spoken in the region to Reep's website; and has helped educate newcomers on how to read energy bills, providing them with basic energy literacy.

In addition, Lisa has fostered a caring and supportive working environment, supporting professional development in the workforce, and acting as a mentor to many.

**Award criteria**

For a staff person who has demonstrated the strongest commitment to a Green Community, bringing about positive change and impact to the organization through their work and achievements.

**Youth Engagement Award - Ecosource**

Ecosource excels at engaging youth in climate education and action by continually offering new and expanded programming.

Its Cultivating Green Champions program engaged 75 youth in 2023, over 90% from equity-deserving groups. These youth completed 6,000 volunteer hours dedicated to environmental stewardship. 84% of participants reported their leadership skills were enhanced by their work to develop and deliver action projects addressing real-world sustainability challenges.

Ecosource also continues to grow its Kids for Climate summer camp. By connecting young people to nature in the heart of Mississauga, Ecosource empowers youth to have a positive impact on the environment and in their community.

**Award criteria**

For a member who excels at engaging youth in programming, not only in school specific programming, but also in camps and other organizational programming.

**Outstanding Board Person - Elanor Waslander, Reep Green Solutions**

Reep Green Solution Board member Elanor Waslander has guided the organization through two unique and challenging times in Reep's history: navigating the pandemic and the succession of Reep's long standing Executive Director.

Elanor brings positive energy to everything she does and always takes time to celebrate wins, which has been especially important the last few years. She is strategic and supportive, a visionary, analytical, and keen to always look for new opportunities.

**Award criteria**

For a board member who has demonstrated the strongest commitment this year, providing excellent stewardship to the organization through their work and achievements.

## **Resilience Awards**

Presented to Green Community member organizations that have continued to succeed despite challenges, thanks to a host of qualities including flexibility and adaptation, and have reached a milestone in longevity.

Ecosource	45 years
Rideau Environmental Action League	35 years
EnviroCentre	25 years
Oakvillegreen	25 years
Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance	25 years
Reep Green Solutions	25 years
Sustainable Kingston	25 years
Halton Environment Network	20 years

GCC also recognized staff who have reached significant milestones in their years of service.

### **5 years**

Sarah Smouter, Reep Green Solutions  
Tom Ewart, Reep Green Solutions  
Michael Gemmell, Reep Green Solutions  
Becca Robinson, Reep Green Solutions  
Elanor Waslander, Reep Green Solutions  
Sonja Teichert, London Environment Network  
Carol Dyck London Environment Network  
Miguel Belcina, London Environment Network  
Heather Bennett, London Environment Network  
Emily Amon, Green Communities Canada

### **10 years**

Britt McKee, Ecosource  
Colin Umbach, Reep Green Solutions

Congratulations to this year's winners! Winners receive a certificate and bragging rights for the year.

*Green Communities Canada is a national non-profit association of community-based environmental organizations working together for a vibrant, equitable and sustainable future. Our mission is to connect community-based climate action groups through a national network to share resources, inspire innovative programming, and elevate our collective impact.*