



# CAMPBELL RIVER MIRROR

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 SEND TO A FRIEND

 FEEDBACK

## Dramatizing climate change



Jill Lang/The Mirror

**Robin Bryan sports a pink dress and side pony-tail and explains the effects of global warming, while participants in the background pretend to be dead trees during an Otesha project skit at Timberline secondary May 17.**

**By Jill Lang**  
**The Mirror**  
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"We're biking through terrain we'd usually drive," said Bell. "But you have to walk the talk to influence teenagers."

Twenty volunteers from the Otesha project rolled into Campbell River on bikes May 17 and 18 to promote global

sustainability through positive activism. Otesha is a Swahili word meaning reason to dream.

The bikers left Vancouver May 7, cycled up the Sunshine Coast, and ferried to Comox from Powell River May 16.

Otesha uses theatre to educate young people, mainly high school students, on how to bring about change on a local level. Bell said that biking around B.C. demonstrates the group's ability to act in a way that reflects what they preach.

"We're living and leading by example," she said. "We want to lighten our impact on the earth."

Otesha volunteers held five workshops and gave one performance at Timberline secondary on Thursday, and gave another performance at St. Patrick's church on Friday evening. Workshop and audience participants were given information about sustainability and encouraged to reflect on global effects of water, coffee, food, clothing, media and transportation.

"We ask that people try and live sustainably," said Bell.

Otesha encourages students to buy ethical clothes from thrift stores or share outfits with friends. Staggered showers and fewer flushes are but two suggestions to limit water use.

In addition, follow the adage, "if it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down," because drinking water is flushed with waste.

Bell said it's OK to leave waste in public facilities, but inform the stall's next visitor that the unflushed toilet is a conscious decision and not meant to be rude.

Otesha also promotes students to lead vegan or vegetarian lifestyles, and only eat free-range, organic meat from local sources. Buy dry foods in bulk and shop at super-markets for fresh fruits and vegetables.

“One of the biggest problems Otesha confronts is the fact that teenagers feel a lot of apathy,” said Bell. “They know all these problem in the world exist, but they don’t know what to do to make a difference.”

Otesha educates students about the importance of self-sustaining countries, particularly third-world countries. A country must be able to support its citizens first before exporting food to other parts of the world.

Charlotte Jacklein is another volunteer on the bike tour, and drives a “support” hybrid car alongside her fellow Otesha cyclists.

In her travels to third-world countries, Jacklein has witnessed what happens to entire communities after grossly underpaid workers spray crops with pesticides — crops that are then exported to countries like Canada. Communities are plagued by diseases like cancer, she said.

Jacklein thinks companies should pay workers higher wages and suggests students take action by boycotting food imported from countries with poor working conditions.

“No company will produce the food if there’s no market for it,” she said. “We need to think about how our choices impact the world.”

Teenagers may be teenagers, but it doesn’t take long for them to warm up to Otesha’s ideas of global sustainability, according to the group.

It probably helps that most of the volunteers are 18 to 25, and dress and look similar to high school students.

For more information or to get involved with the Otesha project, visit [www.otesha.ca](http://www.otesha.ca).



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