

Front Page News

Sustainable Living

Healthy Ecology

Civil Society

News Archives

Search This Site:

[Advanced search](#)

National Edition

About The Publisher

Peterborough, Ontario

Full Story

Youth can impact global issues through daily choices

Monday, April 11, 2005 - Natalie Miller

She rises from her slumber, has a quick shower, slips into vintage clothing, drinks a cup of fair-trade coffee, eats a bowl of organic fruit and then rides her bicycle to school.

During a one-hour morning routine, students can impact many global issues – water consumption, sweatshop labour, fair-trade goods, factory farming and transportation – by the choices they make.

That's one message delivered by The Otesha Project, a non-governmental organization aimed at empowering young people to take action towards a sustainable future. Through a one-hour skit delivered to high school students across the province, youth learn how the choices they make every day can impact the greater world.

Ed Gillis, Triple-H – Hopeful High School Hooligans -- Program co-ordinator for The Otesha Project, is involved in training eight teams of high school students across Ontario to deliver this one-hour skit to students in their area.

“Our goal is to enable and empower our peers to take action,” says Gillis.

“Our basic message we try to get out is everybody has the opportunity to make better choices in the world. You make choices that impact the world for the better or for the worse.”

Otesha delivers a positive message to youth that they can start making a difference now. “It really helps to empower kids to see these global issues tying in to their daily lives.”

The Hopeful High School Hooligans will make a presentation during an upcoming conference at Cobourg District Collegiate Institute (CDCI) East. The fifth annual environmental youth conference on Wednesday features a number of workshops and a keynote speaker. Held at the Cobourg high school at 335 King St. E., the day-long event targets students but is open to anyone in the community.

Grant Elliott, environmental science teacher at CDCI, is organizing the conference. He came up with the idea for the conference five years ago when environmental science was removed from the curriculum in Ontario schools by the previous Conservative government.

The fifth annual environmental youth conference on Wednesday runs from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Call Elliott at 905-372-2271 for more information about the conference or to participate.

Taking Action

 [Comments?](#)

 [Email This Page](#)

 [Print This Page](#)

"If I can't teach it in the class, I'll create a conference," was Elliott's initial reasoning.

"The environment is the one thing that affects every person living. What we do has short-term and long-term implications."

Elliott wanted to equip students with the information to make more informed choices by exposing them to "people who are working and living the environmental movement."

Elliott says there's "a growing awareness" among students about environmental issues like global climate change, water quality and air quality. He says students see closed beaches and have friends with asthma. "So they are starting to see this and starting to make connections."

The teacher hopes after the conference students will reflect on their daily choices and make better decisions.

The conference's keynote speaker is Elizabeth May, executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada. Other presenters include: Henry Wiersma on clay brick construction technology, Alumnus in Residence at Trent University Bruce Kennedy on difficulties associated with helping in developing countries, Simon Boone on alternative energy generation, Greenpeace Canada and alternative health care practitioner Joanna Weirsma.

The conference runs from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Call Elliott at 905-372-2271 for more information about the conference or to participate.