



## 2011 Environment & Diversity Mini-Grants

### Grantee Project Descriptions

#### **Bonnechere River Watershed Project (\$3,900)**

BRWP will enhance its engagement with the aboriginal community within the Bonnechere Watershed to help raise awareness of environmental issues of mutual interest and concern and to address environmental degradation. The desired outcome is to establish a relationship of mutual respect, trust and collaboration in relation to environmental awareness and stewardship particularly now as we are facing the need for developing adaptation strategies to deal with impending environmental effects of a changing climate. We will work with the Algonquins of the Pikwakanagan First Nation at the head of Golden Lake on the Bonnechere River for:

- environmental awareness building including through the visual and performing arts;
- local water quality monitoring;
- the design and implementation of a Nature in Your Neighbourhood partnership initiative including a Cogeco cablevision/YouTube series; and
- outreach to youth through field excursions within the Bonnechere River Watershed.

#### **FutureWatch (\$5,000)**

Changing Faces: Reflecting our diverse communities in our leadership, staff and participants! will build from FutureWatch's experience in engaging newcomer and immigrant communities to participate in environmental initiatives, and our synergies with the Toronto Green Community (TGC) and Transition Oakville (TO). These environmental organizations recognize the importance of working with the newcomer and immigrant groups in the communities they serve; however they currently lack the ability to effectively engage diversity into their organizations and their activities in a sustainable manner. Taking the lessons learned from one of our most recent initiatives: the Green Opportunities Project, FutureWatch will work with TGC and TO to identify their current engagement practices and to determine best avenues to map and engage the newcomer and immigrant groups within the communities they serve. FutureWatch EDEP will then facilitate a series of workshops for the staff and volunteers of TGC and TO that will provide practical tools, policies and procedures by which they will be better poised to engage and interact with the diverse communities they serve.

#### **Greenest City (\$5,000)**

Greenest City has a strong commitment to diversity at all levels of the organization – since initiating our programs in Parkdale in 2006, we have been creating programs that are relevant, accessible and meaningful to everyone in the neighbourhood. The Managing Diversity Initiative aims to address some of the challenges we face in working with individuals from many different ethno-cultural communities by providing workshops and training to ensure that every one in the organization shares a common understanding of diversity and an approach to working together that is open, inclusive and tolerant of difference. This will be accomplished through interactive workshops and training sessions with staff and participants. We will then document our learning and our experiences in a diversity 'Best Practices' guide that will act as a foundational piece for Greenest City's future work in other neighbourhoods and that will also be made available to other groups requesting our assistance.

### **Halton Environmental Network (\$5,000)**

The Halton Environmental Network (HEN) represents approximately 40 environmental non-profit organizations in Halton Region. As part of its role, HEN provides environmental information and referrals for the general public. At present, all of its outreach materials are in English and it uses traditional communication tools. Meanwhile, Halton's immigrant populations are increasing quickly. HEN would like to increase the effectiveness of its outreach by connecting with the various ethno-cultural communities in Halton. In making these connections and determining the environmental mindsets and needs of these communities, links can be made with other environmental organizations to provide mutually-beneficial services and establish ongoing relationships. This initiative fits with the Sustainability Network's priorities of more inclusive programming and communications, and fostering dialogues to enhance cooperation between environmental, settlement, and other organizations.

### **Ontario Environment Network (\$5,000)**

The Ontario Environment Network initiative will focus on:

1. Providing opportunities for OEN and its member organizations to learn about Indigenous cultures (including governance and communication models), our shared history, the process of reconciliation, Ways of Knowing (Traditional Knowledge), including how it supports the International Environmental Protocols, to foster:
  - Understanding of effective cross-cultural organizational environments.
  - Partnerships between Indigenous People's organizations and ENGO's for more effective environmental work resulting from integrating cross cultural perspectives including but not limited to: "Ways of Knowing" and western science knowledge systems;
  - Internal governance policies and practices to foster greater participation of Indigenous People's within and among ENGO's; and
  - Understanding of Indigenous People's issues and their relevance for increasing environmental sustainability and protection.
2. Establishing a base for:
  - Continued sharing between Indigenous Peoples and ENGO'S to address the needs of our shared environment and our future generations; and
  - Creation of an OEN Indigenous People's Circle.

### **Women's Healthy Environments Network (\$1,500)**

Each year, thousands of immigrants enter Canada. While Canada offers many opportunities for newcomers, they are also exposed to a whole new set of environmental hazards in their new homes, workplaces, and communities. For this reason, WHEN has initiated seminars with newcomer women and families to help address their exposure to environmental health hazards.

Since May 2010, WHEN has hosted these seminars in Toronto and Mississauga, reaching over 100 women and families from diverse regions such as South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Given that life in Canada is primarily spent indoors, the sessions emphasize "healthy homes", featuring demonstrations, interactive discussions, and questions and answers about environmental exposures affecting health. Examples of topics addressed include: home gardening and pest control, indoor air quality, and cleaning and personal care products.

Due to the success of these seminars, WHEN is working to expand these seminars to other communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).