

# Annual Report



2016-2017

# Message from the Chair

**G**reen Venture is now 21 years old and Green Venture continues with a primary focus on community based eco-education projects. Be sure to drop by at 22 Veevers Dr, Hamilton any weekday between 9am and 4pm for a tour of the EcoHouse, a hidden showcase for innovation and application of low carbon impact projects. Eco House is a special part of the community, a destination, to showcase implementation and provide inspiration toward implementation of our seven core values: air quality, climate change, eco house, energy wise, lawn & garden, waste watch and wise water use which are all programs based out of our unique heritage home.

2



▲ *Students make “seed bombs” during a gardening education program at EcoHouse.*

Two major new programs this year included the Ecostars summer camp and Raingers. Ecostars brought the summer camp experience to the beautiful grounds of EcoHouse. The first year of this program was very well received. Raingers, in conjunction with the Bay Area Restoration Council, focused on building rain gardens on the grounds of many Hamilton schools. Both programs are excellent examples of our prime focus on eco-education of future citizens. Green Venture also ran a related Ecostars Challenge program during the school year.

UpRoot once again was conducted as a fundraising event to allow both a celebration and to bring the community to EcoHouse. Core funding from the greater community is important to keep Green Venture operational. It will be through your thoughtful and appreciated donation that Green Venture will become more resilient to sustain all of the good programs which have been developed and to create new future programs to help implement sustainability in our community.

On behalf of the board, we would like to thank all the staff and volunteers for our success in 2016. It is the extreme enthusiasm, gift of time, and dedicated effort of volunteers and fellow board members in a busy world which continues to complement the work of staff to make Green Venture a truly sustainable and recognized community organization.

Finally, we would like to thank our funding agencies for continuing to show confidence in Green Venture. Progress continues towards creating sustainable funding support through individual and corporate donations. It was the support and vision of individuals which originally started Green Venture and it will be the support and vision of people in the community who will keep the vision of Green Venture strong.



*Kevin Hunt*

Kevin Hunt  
Chair, Board of Directors

# Message from the Executive Director

**G**reen Venture's mission has now extended into its third decade and we continue to search for ways to help educate about the need to, desirability of, and ease of living more sustainably. Our focus remains leading by example, whether that is through ongoing new demonstrations at the EcoHouse in Hamilton, or by encouraging innovative strategies, such as the Raingers rain garden building program. We also work to make our community a better place, by offering support services, such as the Alleyway Beautification program, and acting as intermediaries to help residents access services, such as through our energy auditing work with the conservation arms of the gas utilities.

We are reminded daily at our office of the virtue in building for the future. The EcoHouse

itself, an 1851 structure, remains in viable use today thanks to our ongoing occupancy and adaptive reuse and the support from the City of Hamilton to preserve it.

Thank you to all of our funders, supporters, staff, Board, and volunteers, for the contributions you make towards making our world just a little bit better.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Gemmell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael Gemmell,  
Executive Director

# 2016-2017 Programs

Alleyways Beautification;  
DePave Paradise;  
EcoDriver;  
EcoHouse- Community Garden;

EcoHouse- Products;  
EcoHouse – Educational Programs  
and Tours;  
Eco Star Challenge;  
EcoStars Summer Camp;  
Education- Outreach Presentations;  
Enbridge Home Weatherization  
Retrofit Program;



EnerGuide Energy Auditing Services;  
Fresh Air for Kids;  
Raingers;  
RAIN Home Visits;  
Seedy Saturday;  
Tastebuds Edible Education Guide;  
Totally Transit for Older Adults;  
Totally Transit for Kids;  
Union Gas Home Renovation Rebate Program;  
Uproot Hamilton.



# Our Board and Staff

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# Eco Star Challenge

From September 2016 to April 2017, Green Venture ran the Eco Star Classroom Challenge which engaged students and teachers in practical strategies to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions in their classrooms and in their homes. A total of 80 classes from 17 different schools participated in the challenge.

Participating classes were given challenges consisting of actions or



**“The Challenge was a great way to incorporate the environment literacy into the classroom.”**

– Teacher, R.A. Riddell Elementary School

activities that taught them more about air quality and climate change, improving air quality, mitigating climate change and/or adapting to climate change. The Ontario curriculum-linked challenges were open to all

**“My students loved the Eco Star Challenge. It was a great way to get them excited about the environment.”**

**– Teacher, Parkdale Elementary School**

Hamilton classes, from kindergarten to grade 8. Green Venture divided the challenges into five themes: Move It, Get Growing, Energy Wise, Recycle That, and The Arts. Over 100 challenges were completed by 1326 students. By completing these challenges, the classes scored points and all qualifying actions were added to the LEARN-CC Hamilton Climate Change Map and featured on our social media. Additionally, they were allowed to enter other environmental related actions that were not specified in the challenge. Every point earned the classes’ one entry into the draw, and some challenges weighted heavier on points than others due to the degree of difficulty. The

random draw was announced May 1, 2017.

The seven winning classes were from the following schools: Hillcrest, Parkdale, R.A Riddell, Dundana, St. Margurite D’Youville, St. Brigit and Dr. Davey. They had the option of choosing between four prizes: a tour of EcoHouse with transportation, a sustainability presentation, a vermicomposter for the classroom including a hands-on presentation, or a smoothie bike presentation which promotes bike safety, reducing car emissions, using less energy, and healthy lifestyles.

◀ *Students from Hillcrest Elementary School were excited to participate in Green Venture’s Eco Star Challenge.*

# EcoStar Summer Camp

In 2016 Green Venture piloted the EcoStars Summer Camp. The goal of EcoStars is to create a cohort of environmental champions; children who will steward the world we live in, and share their values with their families and peers.

The camp consisted of 3 weeks, each week focused on one particular environmental issue. H<sub>2</sub>O- that's a lot of water, Bugs 'n Bloom and Eco Explorer. Each week consisted of 5 days of activities – Monday to Friday, 8am–5pm; with option for early drop off times to accommodate working parents. While attending EcoStars, campers were exposed to activities, games, workshops, crafts, field trips and more with interesting environmental based programming each day of their week long experience. Weekly field trips included

**“Daniel had a great time and he has become more responsible with recycling and watering the plants at home.”**

**– Parent of EcoStars Summer Camp participant**

visits to the Royal Botanical Gardens, Dundurn’s Castle’s Historical Gardens, Victory Gardens, Dundas Conservation Area and the Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology.

A total of 47 campers registered for the camp over the three week period. The camp was open to camper’s ages 7 to 12, however the bulk of the age group was ages 8 and 9. With some additional funding from the CHML Children’s Fund, Green Venture was able to



provide 28 no-cost camper placements to families requiring financial assistance.

It is our ultimate goal of the EcoStars Summer Camp initiative to have it be a self-sufficient program that doesn't require funding in future years. To that end, Green Venture will, demand permitting, increase the number of weeks offered in 2017 and 2018, with the overall goal of attaining 8 weeks of programming in future years.

◀ *EcoStars summer campers on a visit to the McQuesten Farm.*



# Rangers Rain Gardens

**G**reen Venture and the Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC) have teamed up to train and inspire students to be active keepers of our water. Entrusted with the important job of protecting and preserving the Hamilton Harbour Watershed, the newly trained Rangers will have the knowledge and skills to make lasting change.

Through our hands on experiential stormwater management program, Rangers from 7 different elementary schools in Hamilton have learned in 2016-17 about the serious problems relating to stormwater and polluted stormwater runoff. Inside the classroom, these Rangers use model homes to measure captured and polluted stormwater. They incorporate low impact development (LID) techniques such as rain

barrels, disconnecting downspouts and rain gardens to capture stormwater before it hits the storm drain. The Rangers also go on an investigative walk outside to identify where water flows around their school and try to identify LIDs in their neighbourhood. The final step in their training involves a practical and positive solution to stormwater management: installing a rain garden at their school, capturing stormwater, reducing stormwater pollution and ultimately, protecting our watershed.

Rangers rain gardens provide a perfect setting to teach about water quality, habitat creation and the impact of student actions on protecting Hamilton Harbour and its watershed. The native plants and species in a rain garden have high tolerance for excess



▲ The rain garden outside of Pauline Johnson Elementary School includes an educational sign that explains the importance of collecting storm water.

moisture and increased levels of nutrients often found in stormwater. These gardens can be a powerful tool to make connections between land development, water quality, and personal actions.

Did you know? A rain garden is a sunken garden planted with deep-rooted native plants and grasses designed to capture, absorb and naturally filter stormwater. A strategically placed rain garden will intercept the flow of stormwater and allow water to slowly infiltrate into the ground rather than contribute to stormwater runoff. Compared to a conventional patch of lawn, a rain garden increases ground water infiltration by about 30%.

We're only half way through our Raingers Rain Garden program and will be building a total of 21 rain gardens within the Hamilton watershed by the end of 2018!

Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Raingers Rain Gardens program is available to any school in the Hamilton Watershed.



▲ *Students learn the benefits of planting native species in the rain gardens.*



# 258,057

LITRES OF STORMWATER DIVERTED ANNUALLY

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# 320

SQUARE METRES OF RAIN GARDENS INSTALLED

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# 320

NATIVE SPECIES PLANTED

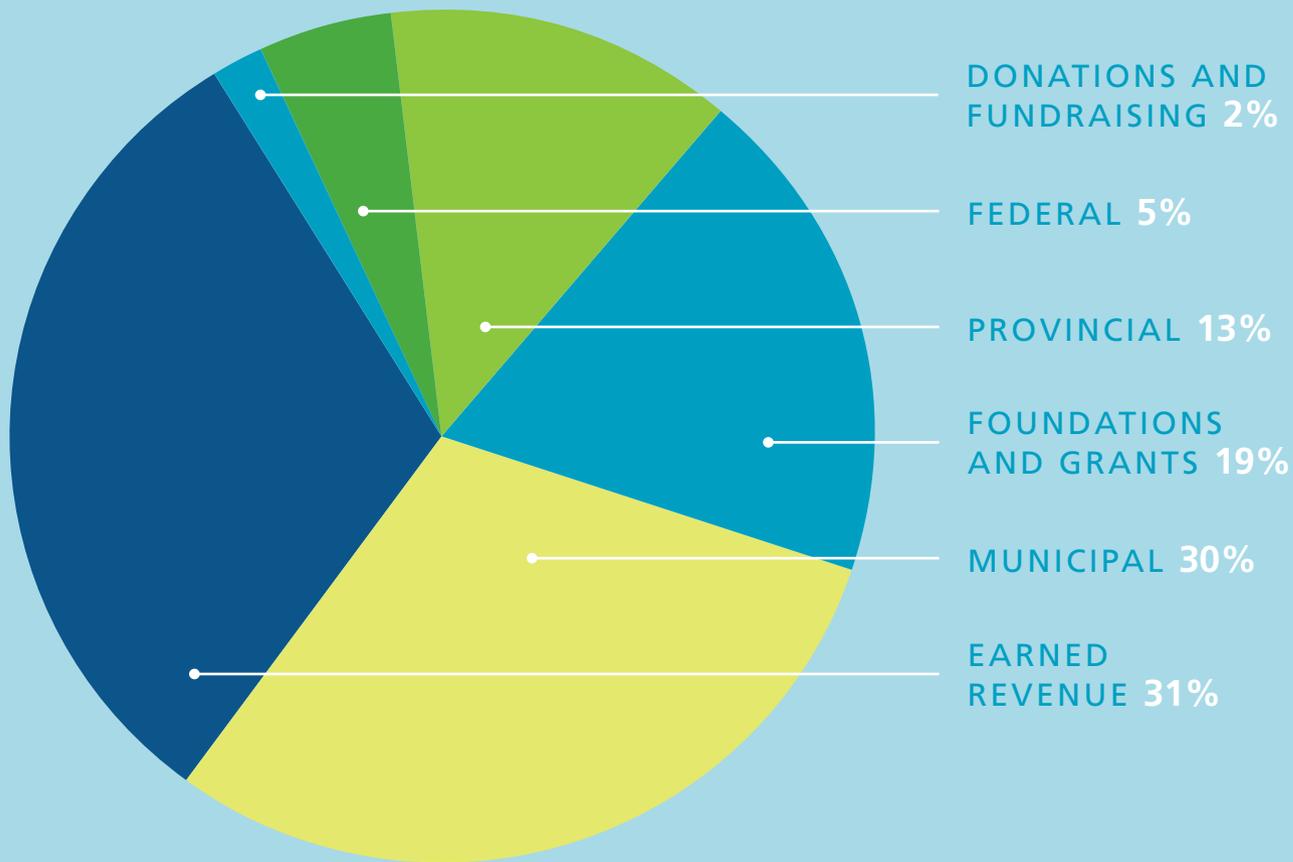
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# 7

RAIN GARDENS INSTALLED

# Financials

	Audited 2016/2017	Audited 2015/2016
Revenue	\$ 422,325	\$514,997
Expense	\$ 440,410	\$453,938
Balance	\$ (18,085)	\$(2066)



# Our Supporters

Green Venture graciously thanks the following for their support during 2016-2017:

Brian Charlton

City of Hamilton

CHML Children's Fund

Clean Air Hamilton

Community Foundation of Canada

Conserver Society of Hamilton and District

Diane LeBreton-Gerrish

Dougher Foundation Fund

Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc.

ECO Canada

Kayla Jonas Galvin

Kathryn Enders

Government of Canada

Green Communities Canada

Hamilton Community Foundation

Hamilton Industrial Environmental  
Association

Hamilton Spectator Summer Camps Fund

Intact Foundation

Malloch Foundation Fund

Melissa Alexander

Mohawk College

Niagara Community Foundation

Ontario Ministry of the Environment and  
Climate Change

Ontario Ministry for Seniors

Ontario Trillium Foundation

RA Riddell School

TD Friends of the Environment

Union Gas



## Green Venture

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