

Nature for Life!

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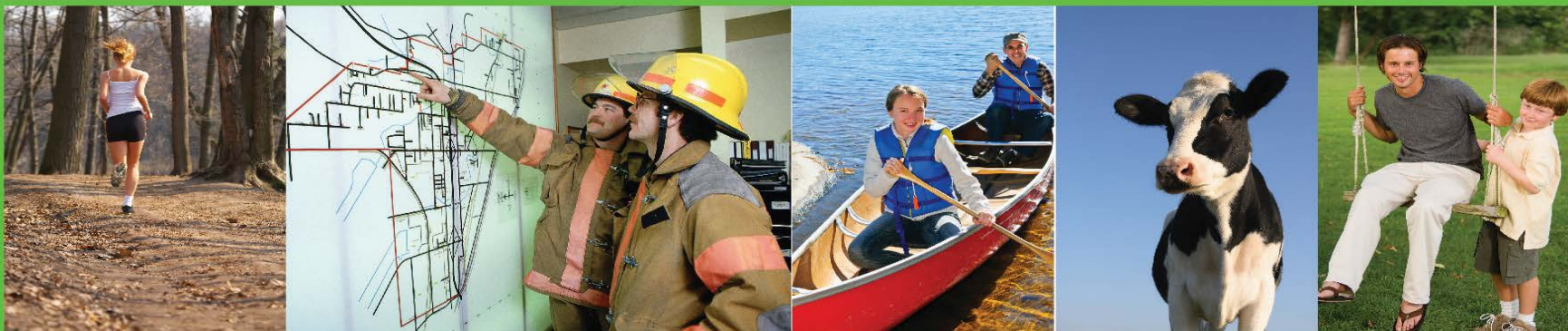












Healthy Communities Vision

www.llghealthy.org



Healthy Community Vision:

Healthy people in
Lanark, Leeds &
Grenville, live, learn,
work and play in
healthy communities.



Healthy Community Vision (cont'd)

- All community members have the opportunity to make the choices that enables them to live a healthy life, regardless of income, education, or ability.
- Healthy community environments promote well being and quality of life and contribute to integrated community sustainability.



Leeds, Grenville & Lan

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Nature for Life Goals

- Families will recognize the value of time spent in nature, and will provide opportunities for children to experience nature both structured and unstructured ways.
- Connecting children with nature will become part of the culture of the community - local school boards, service providers, community organizations, business etc.
- Municipalities will create, protect and provide natural environments for residents and visitors to enjoy.
- Parks and outdoor recreation sites will be well utilized by children and families.

Workshop Objectives

1. To provide an opportunity to learn about the value of time spent in nature for children and families.
2. To connect with like-minded people and identify shared interest in nature initiatives for children and families.
3. To identify specific projects to develop further to enhance connection with nature for families and children.

Format for the Day

- 9:00 Welcome and Objectives
- 9:15 Dr. Cheryl Charles
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 What are we doing and what could we do?
(Pairs and Large Group Work)
- 12:15 Lunch and Networking
- 1:00 Dr. Michael Cheng
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 What will we do? (Small Group Work)
- 3:15 Closing Remarks
- 3:30 Home to Nature

Successes

- School gardens (butterfly /vegetable)
- Curriculum connections
- Summer Family Nature Program (inclusive, free with entry, drop in, accessible)
- Outdoor Classrooms for traditional and non-traditional subjects example: math, science, art and poetry
- Outdoor pony camps for children 6-18
- Inspire/educate others to join at their own level with their own control
- Having a broad group of partners invested in initiative
- College kids – outdoor rec program – to clean up garbage, kids had pride in nature on their clean up jobs
- Geocaching for family connections

Successes

- Nature based day camp
- After dinner family walks with or without dog(s)
- Home vegetable garden
- Wilderness adventure
- Grade 12 Earth and space course and grade 11 environmental science course brought to school – lots of field trips to do hands on exploration and learning
- Charlie the caterpillar – creating wonder
- Direct tactile learning: Chick Incubation, snow angel party
- Eco School Certification
- Youth Justice connected to community based nature programs

Successes

- Making outdoor activities possible for a family with high-needs special needs children
- Leadership camp, day camp, outdoor activity
- Rental – canoes, kayaks, etc.
- Baird Trail (Lanark Highlands on Heron Mills Road)
- Simple activities/ideas that reinforce competency & curiosity in children, trust in adult-child relationship
- Cameras and kids – photographs of nature
- Eco schools project linking food growth to home and school – touch – taste – feel
- Need other groups like churches to do, school trips to outdoor education/ CA's, teachable moments and spontaneity, creativity, need parents to have time to participate
- Early learning nature workshop, brock trail development

Strategies to Promote Nature Connection for Families/Children/Youth

- Promote existing opportunities for nature connection
- Create new opportunities
- Engage parents/ families
- Adopt policies to support connection with nature
- Raise funds/Recruit volunteers to support local initiatives
- Build supportive culture

Promote Existing Opportunities

- Step by Step Guide for the available resources and how to do projects – websites, aggressive government messaging, similar to tobacco – need to normalize benefits of nature
- Nature Watch billboards – in schools and community centres
- Establishing interpretive signage to promote nature and independent learning
- Identifying and being aware of resources in the community, shared resource source
- Using already existing services to support classrooms to get outside and do more of curriculum outside
- Idea sharing between educators re: successful tips

Create New Opportunities

- Be aware, seek and be open to new, unique and creative partnerships in our communities
- Simple activities/ideas that reinforce competency & curiosity in children, trust in adult-child relationship
- Create accessible spaces in each community
- Need (Bike) trails in communities for families
- Build school based gardens, trail inventory (trail heads – boat access)
- Building partnerships between schools, Health Unit, municipalities, community partners
- Piggyback nature to existing programs

Engage Parents/ Families

- Create opportunities for parents to be involved
- Projects to support “back to nature” - address social media influences
- Help parents to balance fears with benefits
- Support workplace balance - family time, employee satisfaction
- Support unstructured outdoor play “Park Parent” or afterschool nature programs
- Limit or redirect technology use (use it for good!!)
- Family Cycling Touring Club – overnight tours to natural destinations
- Family Outdoor Day with guidelines ex: no cell phones

Raise Funds/Recruit Volunteers to Support Local Initiatives

- Recruit Champions to support fundraising initiatives
- Recruit volunteers to support initiatives commitment
- Find financial aid to support local initiatives

Adopt Policies to Support Connection with Nature

- Advocate for change in school policy (address liability concerns)
- Eliminate barriers to participation – liability, \$, transportation, top down decision making partnerships
- Educate policy makers.
- Address concerns related to liability
- Workplace Policies - Employees have flexibility to take time during the day to do nature activities
- Plan infrastructure to immerse people in nature (i.e., low impact storm water management)

Build Supporting Culture

- Cultural attitudinal change with existing organizations, educators, service providers
- Address concerns related to liability
- Opportunities to share ideas, resources, research, etc.
- Take risks remove the fear, remember our youth!!

Specific Projects

- Wildlife Sighting Board for School
- School Outdoor Learning Area
- Create an Inventory of Hiking Trails/Trail Heads in Lanark County
- Outdoor education in junior grades
- Asphalt Removal and Tree Planting – School SF
- Re-invented 3 R's Schools JK – Grade 12
- Park Parent Program at Gemmill Park
- Pre-School Nature Program at Petrie Island
- Professional Education
- Young Naturalists Club
- Library Nature Packs