

Town Council presents 10th annual Environmental Sustainability awards

By Mike Baker

Several members of the Orangeville community were recipients of the Town's 10th annual Environmental Sustainability Awards this week.

The presentations were made at the April 29 meeting of Orangeville Council, by Councillor Grant Peters, who chairs Sustainable Orangeville.

The awards, presented by the Town on an annual basis, recognize those who have made a positive environmental contribution to the community.

The 2019 Environmental Sustainability Award recipients:

Business ? Déjà Vu Restaurant

Déjà Vu is recognized for its environmental efforts. Shortly after Jen Betz purchased the restaurant, she implemented a number of practices to reduce waste. The restaurant composts all table scraps and food waste, coffee grounds and filters. Most condiments, including their homemade jam, can be found in reusable containers or even in small paper cups. Ms. Betz uses social media to find new homes for items that are no longer usable in the restaurant. For example, she collects the bread tags and a local teacher picks them up and uses them in the classroom as counters in math lessons. Déjà Vu serves milk and cream in reusable glass bottles. This is a practice that eliminates about 1,700 plastic creamers per week. The restaurant staff support these practices and are some of Orangeville's sustainability leaders.

Individual ? Sylvia Bradley

Sylvia Bradley is well-known in our community as an environmental champion. Under her leadership, over 12,000 trees and shrubs have been planted along streets, waterways, and parks. Her spirit and enthusiasm at community events touches everyone, encouraging youth and adults to do their part. Ms. Bradley served on Council for three consecutive terms and she has been a devoted member of many municipal committees. But it was her environmental work that inspired community action and led to many new initiatives. She led the Orangeville Sustainability Action Team, now known as Sustainable Orangeville, to plant thousands of trees and shrubs, increasing Orangeville's natural capital and beautifying the Town. Ms. Bradley initiated the Orangeville Community Garden and fruit and nut orchard, providing garden space for citizens to grow their own food as well as food for the Orangeville Food Bank. Under her leadership, the committee encouraged active transportation with the creation of three bike routes around Town and the committee linked local restaurants with county waste management and best practices for managing food waste reduction. Ms. Bradley has ensured that sustainability is incorporated into Town planning documents. Her lasting legacy is the thousands of trees that have been planted since 2007, the cleaning of the Credit Valley Watershed as it runs through Orangeville, and the continued environmental engagement in Orangeville.

Youth ? Anika Bennett

Anika Bennett brings awareness to environmental issues through school projects as well as local and international events. She participates annually in the WWF CN Tower stair climb and she promotes the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and the David Suzuki Foundation. She has made presentations to her class on the impacts of one-time use plastics in our oceans. For the past two years, Anika has participated in the Earth Day tree planting programs in Orangeville.

Group ? Parkinson Public School Eco Club

Parkinson Centennial Public School's Eco Club plans many activities with the environment in mind. The achievements by the Parkinson Eco team are significant as they set an example for the entire school and community, and are having an impact on the environment by reducing their waste, carbon footprint and energy consumption. They are learning at a young age the importance of sustainability.

During the current school year, the club has participated in the following programs:

- A battery recycling challenge (collecting 385 kg of batteries)
- A Bag2School textile campaign (collecting 4400 pounds of textile waste and emerging as the top school in Ontario in this campaign)
- Juice box collection (the Eco team collected juice boxes for an entire week to show the number of juice boxes consumed in a year and to encourage proper disposal or alternative choices)
- Litterless lunch days every Tuesday
- Compost/paper towel campaign (additional compost bins are used to increase placing food waste and organics in the green bin)
- Trees for School (a team has partnered with Copernicus Education to provide each student with a tree seedling so they can give back to nature)
- Parkinson forest/yard April clean-up, including Everykids Park in Harvey Curry Park