
Annual Report

RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION LEAGUE

February 1, 2017 - January 31, 2018



Box 1061, Smiths Falls, ON K7A 5A5, www.realaction.ca

Message From The President

REAL is truly fortunate to have had the resources to continue its existing projects, as well as initiate a few more. A new Enbridge program began providing home energy upgrade rebates, and REAL is authorized to provide the home energy assessments required. REAL piloted a project to assist some limited income Lanark County residents with wooden clothes drying racks. The Evergreen Avenue Committee dedicated a new Vimy Ridge memorial at Victoria Park. And, a grant from the Pilkington-Henniger Foundation made it possible to extend the REAL Action Grant program started in our 25th anniversary year.

As you can imagine, everyone at REAL is very busy. Sue Brandum took a managerial role in the store until we hired our new Renovations Manager in May. In the fall, Lorraine Allen, who has been our Smiths Falls Council liaison, also joined the REAL Board. Effective January 1, the board is assuming some duties left by Sue Brandum's resignation. REAL is fortunate to have a very dedicated working board. After a year that was heavier on administrative tasks, the board is looking forward to spending more of its energy on projects that empower our community to make responsible environmental choices. This is what makes being part of REAL so rewarding.

Looking Ahead to 2018. At the REAL Deal we will be looking to increase the flow of household renovation materials and putting increased emphasis on staff training and health and safety. The board has begun a review of its bylaws, and will be making some staffing decisions. The compost shelter and demonstration site will be completed, radon meters will be available to borrow, and we will organize more public education events. In early 2018, the board is doing some strategic planning and reexamining REAL's project list. We want to ensure we have sufficient resources to do the projects we undertake well.

As always, we value your comments, and would especially welcome your participation. Please get in touch so we can explore the possibilities.

Barb Hicks, Interim President



Some of our volunteers and work placements in the REAL Deal yard.



Unveiling the Vimy Memorial at Evergreen Avenue in June 2017.



Donna, showing art featured in our annual Second Hand Art Sale.

The REAL Deal Reuse Store

Now entering its tenth year, the REAL Deal Reuse Store continues to thrive. The store accepts gently used household and renovation materials that might otherwise end up in the landfill.



The store welcomed 11,427 customers this year from across the region, and accepted just under 43,000 kgs of used materials. The electronic

waste bin was filled almost every two weeks, and was a steady income earner for the store. Despite the wet summer, we sold more than 40 rain barrels.



Don Mathewson

In addition to our core hours of Thursday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the store was open Sundays from noon until four beginning in April, and ending after the two week Christmas shutdown.

In May the store welcomed Don Mathewson as the new Renovations Manager. Don's background in construction and retail will help REAL expand the household renovation materials component of its operation. Don joins Shelley Wills, our in-store Manager. Rounding out the team is a dedicated group of volunteers and work placements, notably Don Harvey and Tim Dupras. REAL is resourceful in making use of work experience and employment subsidy programs wherever possible.

Sue Brandum Moves On

At the end of the year, REAL said good-bye to Susan Brandum who served as the REAL Deal's dedicated Executive Director and Environmental Project Director. Sue's many accomplishments include collaborating with other Green Communities to develop the EnerGuide for Houses program, developing and delivering the national award-winning Well Aware program, and launching the REAL Deal Reuse Store. Her environmental leadership has been a key element in creating the well-established environmental non-profit that REAL is today. We wish her well as she pursues new environmental opportunities.



Susan Brandum

The REAL Board will take some time to reorganize our human resources. Meanwhile, please contact any one of our board members with any questions or concerns are our operations.

REAL Board of Directors

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Local Environmental Actions



REAL broccoli from the REAL Community Garden where ten gardeners had the opportunity to grow their own produce!

REAL continues to offer home energy audits to residents with Registered Energy Advisor, Alan Leonard. REAL also continues to make the Kill-a-Watt meter available for lending at local libraries and will be piloting a Radon Testing program come Spring 2018. REAL began to offer drying racks to qualifying individuals to help reduce energy consumption, increase clothing longevity, and reduce energy costs.

The Evergreen Avenue continues to maintain a shaded walkway in Victoria Park planted with native species. This year, a new memorial was added and dedicated to the memory of Smiths Falls Soldiers who served in WW1.

Despite the heavy rain experienced over the two weeks, REAL's annual Pitch-In Smiths Falls continued to attract a broad cross-section of residents to clean up litter in April.

This was the eighth season for REAL's Community Garden. The garden continues to grow and attract newcomers, and is an interesting mix of young and old, new and experienced gardeners. Produce from the Stone Soup Sharing Plot was available to the public. This year's weather led for wonderful yield of fresh produce.

Communications

REAL maintains a website, www.REALaction.ca, as well as three active Facebook pages for REAL, the REAL Deal Store and the Community Garden. Anyone can join our email list to receive communications about events and volunteer opportunities. Five 8-page newsletters are produced per year and emailed to members, with paper copies available at select locations in Smiths Falls. We also use local media to encourage environmental actions.

Community Engagement



Barb Hicks and volunteer, Kathleen Kryskow, lead environmentally friendly crafts at Paddlefest.

REAL takes advantage of opportunities to interact with the public, or to show our community support. This year we participated in the Smiths Falls Public Library's Trivia Challenge. We also provided volunteers and board members Rideau Roundtable's Paddlefest, where a REAL booth was set up and offered environmental-friendly crafts (see left photo). REAL also supported local environmental community initiatives by providing 3 REAL Action Grants of \$250 to local groups. This year's recipients included RNJ Youth Services, a Grade 10 class from SFCDI, and the Food for Thought Program at SFDCI.



Photo Courtesy of Simon Lunn

Taking in the stunning view of the Rideau.

Funding Our Projects

An annual “Customer Ask” at Andress’ Your Independent Grocer raised \$1193 for REAL. Our Local Foods Harvest Dinner and Silent Auction at the Lombardy Agricultural Hall raised \$7,500, and effectively showcased local food. REAL also participated in a bottle drive at the Beer Store and raised \$270. A long-time supporter made a fifth generous donation of \$5,000. We are grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Town of Smiths Falls and neighbouring municipalities Drummond/North Elmsley and Montague who provide sustaining funding, and for Rideau Lakes Council for supporting REAL for the first time. A full financial review engagement is completed by CA Don Ross, and will be available by mid-June.

Contribute to the Future of the Local Environment

If protecting the natural environment of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville is important to you and your family, please consider supporting the activities of REAL, you local environmental organization, with a tax deductible donation.

Cheques can be mailed to the box address indicated on the first page, or dropped off at the REAL Deal Store. If you prefer to make an online credit card donation, you may do so via CanadaHelps.org or PayPal (see the link on our “Join” page.) To explore how you could include REAL in your in your estate planning, see our website under the “DONATE” tab.



Help REAL grow by making a donation today!



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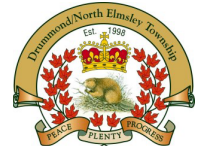
THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION



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REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment!