

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL) 2008 in Review



What we've been doing

Our major accomplishment for the year has been establishing a new **REAL Deal Store** and Environment Centre at 85 William St. W. The building changes and move from 2 Gould St. were an enormous undertaking for our volunteers. The store was fully opened June 19; and sales during the first six months exceeded our expectations.

The development of the **Environment Centre** is an ongoing project. So far we have consolidated our programs and information in one location. A volunteer landscape architect is developing a plan for the 3 acre property, and REAL has put in a native garden, experimented with a small garden plot, and planted 40 tree seedlings and butternut trees.

The **ecoENERGY** program has been an ongoing success, with our energy auditor fully booked during winter months. We wrapped up a successful limited income retrofit pilot in January, and are eagerly awaiting an expanded program.

Our certified Well Guide was busy doing **Well Aware visits** all summer and into the fall, and a number of public presentations took place promoting the program.

Pitch In Smiths Falls was the most successful to date, with 1000 volunteers participating. The **Evergreen Avenue** Committee continued to maintain the pathway and native plantings at Victoria Park, and began replacing the paver lights with dedicated granite stones. They also held a successful fundraising concert in November.

The Climate Change Action Team continued with a range of projects, including tips in local media, a planned bike route map, prototype bike trailers, a municipal survey, promotion of clotheslines, and addressing idling at the Abbott Street lock crossing.

A **winter workshop series** organized in cooperation with the Rideau Canal Museum featured climate change adaptation, renewable energy options and species at risk.

And the year ended with another successful benefit **concert by the Central Band** of the Canadian Forces November 26.

Behind the scenes the board made excellent use of some **Trillium funding** to develop a volunteer program, apply to Revenue Canada for charitable status, make connections with area municipalities, and revamp our accounting system. The Board also revisited REAL's Business Plan.

REAL was visible in the community through the annual Trivia Challenge, a curling bonspiel, the Social Justice Expo, the Art of Being Green, asking questions of federal electoral candidates and providing input to Smiths Falls Strategic Plan. We continued our connections with Green

Communities Canada, the Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Tay, Rideau Roundtable, Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve and the Smiths Falls Chamber of Commerce.

We took the opportunity of our June AGM to bestow upon **Elva Corless**, a founding member of REAL, the title Director Emerita. We continue to communicate information about REAL events, environmental issues and promote the activities of similar organizations through our notices, newsletter, website and newspaper submissions.

Who made it happen

Lots of people coordinated with serious volunteer effort! For paid staff we had our Store Manager, a number of contracted staff, and a summer student. Susan Brandum is our Environmental Projects Manager, as well as putting in many volunteer hours.

We have benefited from volunteers from Katimavik, Canada World Youth and Ontario Works and other programs. It is difficult to provide an exhaustive volunteer list, but we certainly appreciate them all.

Our 2008 Board consisted of Barb Hicks (President), Larry Manson (Vice-President), Carolyn Fraser (Treasurer), Karen Schecter (Secretary), Claudia Mosher and Peter Au. Thanks to Lynne Evans for her time with us. Last month we welcomed a new board member, Eileen Crosbie.

What to look for in 2009

Continued development of the REAL Deal and Environment Centre. A completed Take it Back Recylopedia. Final year of Well Aware. Continued ecoENERGY program and a reinstated limited income retrofit program. A volunteer coordinator to put our plan into place. More fundraising. A year long celebration of REAL's 20th Anniversary Year.

Why should you renew your membership

You want to be a part of the exciting developments at REAL, because you believe that we can all make a difference to our local environment. You are the moral support for our work and a body of people with whom we can share ideas. REAL would not exist without the financial contributions and volunteer efforts of our members. **Thank you for your support!**

Box 1061, Smiths Falls, ON K7A 5A5
www.REALaction.ca
info@REALaction.ca

REAL DEAL Store and Environment Centre
85 William St. W., Smiths Falls
Store: (613) 283-7999
Environment Centre: (613) 283-9500

Celebrating 20 Years of Environmental Achievement