

August 2016

## Reasons to Support REAL, Your Local Environmental Organization

During the week of August 28 to Sept. 3, Address Your Independent Grocer cashiers will be asking customers if they would like to donate a toonie to their local environmental organization, REAL. Please say yes. Your donation make it possible for REAL to continue its environmental projects to reduce waste, protect water and promote clean, efficient use of energy in this community.

REAL has been active in Smiths Falls and across Lanark, Leeds and Grenville for almost 27 years now. REAL is a small, consistent, non-profit organization, and a well-respected environmental voice. Today REAL best known for its REAL Deal Reuse Store, Pitch-In Smiths Falls, Evergreen Avenue, our REAL Community Garden and e-waste recycling. All of these initiatives make a difference in our own backyard, and help raise the environmental consciousness of our community.

REAL contributes to the local economy through its purchasing power, and is careful to choose local or green businesses whenever possible. Although REAL does apply for contributions from residents, municipalities and foundations, a significant port of its income is earned, largely through the REAL Deal Store.

REAL has been able to provide short term employment to dozens of people, frequently youth, in order to run its programs. Besides providing an income, the participants learn skills, gain experience and become environmental advocates. REAL has also provided meaningful work placements through programs such as Katimavik, Canada World Youth and Ontario Works. Volunteers are what really make REAL "tick. Their dedication, enthusiasm and pride in what they are doing shows.

REAL is innovative. It has played a key role in developing programs that have been used by other Green Communities , such as Well Aware and the home energy audits. And it is able to come up with programs that are specific to our local situation. When it was determined that drivers would benefit from learning the disadvantages of idling their vehicles, REAL took the opportunity to speak to drivers stopped on waiting for the locks to turn on Abbott Street. When a commercial enterprise collecting electronic waste left town, REAL stepped in and became a registered Ontario Electronic Waste recycling depot.

REAL provides hands-on opportunities for residents to participate in environmental protection. People are embracing the concept of reducing waste through reuse, both by donating used household goods and renovation materials to the REAL Deal, and by looking to purchase gently used items at the store before buying new. People are making great use of the electronics waste recycling depot operated on the site.. Every spring, Smiths Falls residents volunteer to help clean up litter in the annual Pitch In Smiths Falls campaign. REAL also provides the guidance people make to take other "green" steps in their households through workshops on energy reduction, stormwater management and repurposing, to name a few.

These are just some of the ways REAL has benefited our community and provided a strong environmental voice for residents. Your small donation will help ensure these activities continue.

For more about REAL activities, please see their website [www.REALaction.ca](http://www.REALaction.ca).