

## Smiths Falls is Still Pitching In

By Shannon Hicks

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This year marked the 56<sup>th</sup> year of Pitch-In cleanups taking place across Canada. REAL has been participating in Pitch In since 1989, and organizing community wide cleanups since the early 2000s. From April 15<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>s individuals and groups once again cleaned up Smiths Falls and surrounding areas. We were once again pleased with the turnout this year.

Of the several groups that conducted clean ups this year, new to us was the Smiths Falls and Perth District Hospitals, who cleaned up around their respective sites. The three divisions of the Smiths Falls Scouts – the Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts cleaned up three sites and collected a total of 18 bags of garbage. The WAK Youth Program and The Church of Latter Day Saints did clean ups as well. SFDCI's environmental club did a cleanup of Lower Reach park and their schoolyard, collecting 4 bags of recyclables and 15 bags of garbage. Chimo Elementary school cleaned up their school yard as well as surrounding streets, collecting 4 bags of garbage and 1 bag of recyclables. Community Living did a cleanup and entered both of our contests, so we are very pleased to award them one of our prizes this year. We really appreciate the participation of groups in Pitch In, as they make a big difference in large spaces that need extra help.

Many individuals also participated, cleaning up around their homes and the streets they frequent. It's a great thing to do for the community and the environment, and we are quite grateful to all the individuals and families who pitched in this year as well. Special thanks to the Town of Smiths Falls staff for picking up the filled bags.

Part of the fun of Pitch In are the peculiar items you might find. Here are a few of the most notable: a commemorative spoon, a toy riding horse, a sink stopper, a \$5 bill, a horn, a sled, a bike, a grill, vodka bottles, and a very large spool.

Certain items were found in great supply – bottles, cans, fast food wrappers, plastic bags, disposable cutlery, coffee cups, cigarette packages, takeout containers, cardboard. However, there were much fewer face masks found this year than last.

In our BINGO response form we received some thoughtful responses that are worth sharing.

In response to, "Was there anything that surprised you while cleaning up?"

"...the amount of garbage on the streets in such a small town."

"...just how much people throw things away."

"...all the plastic bottles that were not recycled."

In response to the question, "Is there a message you would like to say to those who litter?"

Someone may think twice about littering, “if they had to clean it up”.

“Next time you throw that plastic bottle out, think of how many years that plastic will stay on the ground.”

“Take pride in where you live and treat it like it is your own temple – keep it beautiful.”

Thank you for the responses we received this year. And thank you to our members, volunteers, and contest participants - we hope to see you pitching in again next year!

To learn more about The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, visit <https://shorelinecleanup.org/>. To learn more about Pitch In Canada, <https://pitch-in.ca/>

