



# UPDATE QUARTERLY

September 2023

## FREE WEBINAR

### Mission Possible: Launch Your Waste Reduction Journey!

**D**id you know that the amount of waste generated in Ontario, and Canada as a whole, is among the highest levels of waste generated per person in the world? A total of 12–15 million tonnes of non-haz-

ardous waste is generated in Ontario each year. If Ontario continues on its current trajectory of waste generation and disposal, existing landfill sites in the province will be filled within the next 9–12 years.

#### NVEB Youth Advocate Leader Selected As Wilmot's Youth Citizen of the Year

**N**ith Valley EcoBoosters' (NVEB) Lyndsay Dajka has been selected as Wilmot Township's Youth Citizen of the Year. Lyndsay joined EcoBoosters in April 2021 and worked to establish the youth arm of NVEB.



Lyndsay Dajka

The pandemic was running rampant when Lyndsay started her endeavours to establish the Youth Advocates group, but her persistent cheeriness, high energy, and enthusiasm to tackle environmental issues at the local level has brought success.

Demonstrating exceptional leadership skills, she has worked hard to add members and expand their reach into local schools. Lyndsay prepared agendas, set up Zoom meetings, did presentations at schools, ran recruitment events and very capably chaired YA meetings. Lyndsay is leaving EcoBoosters to study environmental engineering at university.

[Learn more about Lyndsay's YA experience on page 10.](#)

#### New Hamburg Independent to go Digital-Only

by Lee Ann Waterman, Metroland Media

**T**oday, Sept. 15, Metroland Media announced it will be restructuring its operations and seeking protection under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.

As part of this plan, most of Metroland's 71 community newspapers will move to a digital-only model. The final delivery of your local paper was this week. Metroland's six daily publications will continue to publish both online and in print.

We are confident this restructuring will make Metroland a sustainable business moving forward.

Approximately 40% of Ontario's waste is generated inside the home. The balance is generated outside the home, by almost 1.6 million businesses, corporations and institutions. The Nith Valley EcoBoosters are hosting a free webinar, *Mission Possible: Launch Your Waste Reduction Journey!* on Thursday, September 28 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. EDT. Participants will learn about specific steps that can be taken to reduce waste in their lives and also what corporations and governments need to do to reduce waste.

Our keynote speaker is Jamie Kaminski. With more than 30 years in the waste diversion industry, Jamie is a seasoned international speaker with broad knowledge of local and global zero-waste policies. He has spoken at zero-waste and waste-related conferences, and to companies in the private and public sectors. As the co-developer of the first globally accessible zero-waste education program, he has trained and mentored over 100 individuals and industry professionals. Besides his role as President of HSR Services and HSR Zero Waste, Jamie is the Director and Lead Policy Advisor for Zero Waste Canada and a Board Member of the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA) policy group. His media appearances include interviews on CBC News–The National, Global BC, CTV News Vancouver, and CBC Radio-Canada. Jamie's presentation will include a discussion of what governments and corporations need to do to manage the waste problem followed by specific actions that individuals can take to reduce waste in their lives.

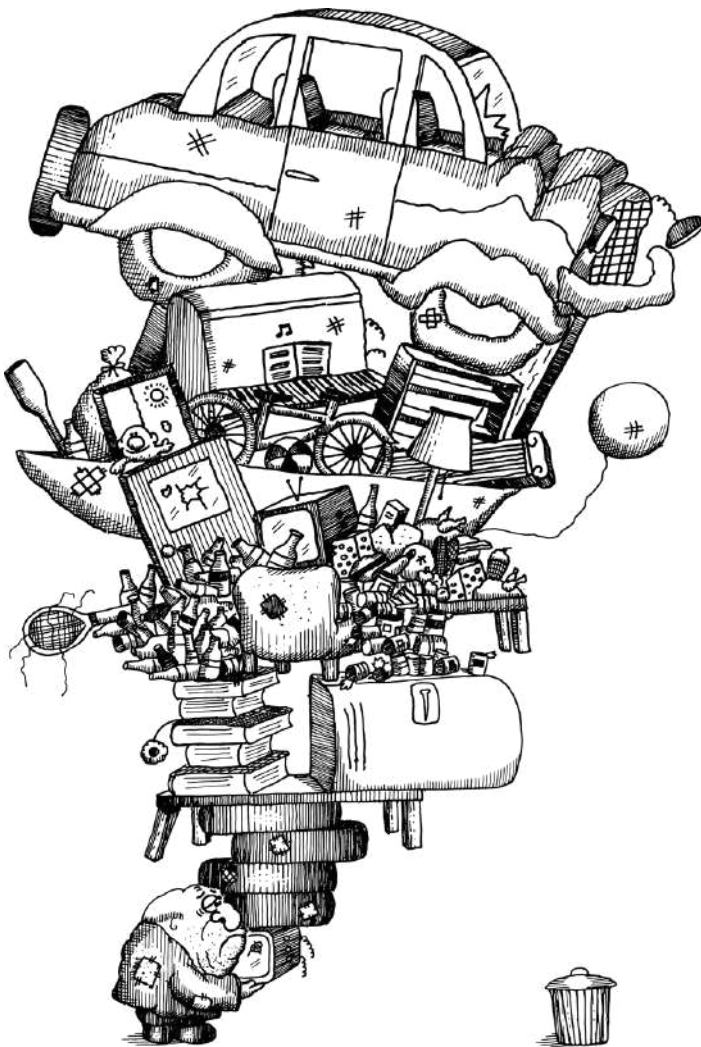
Following Jamie's presentation, a panel consisting of members of the community will share their personal experiences trying to reduce waste. A Question & Answer period will follow the presentations.

Register for this free event: <https://nvecoboosters.com/> or <https://bit.ly/missionwaste>. For more information contact Tom Knezevich at [nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com)

# MISSION POSSIBLE!

LAUNCH YOUR **WASTE REDUCTION** JOURNEY!

**Thursday, September 28th, 2023, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.**



**OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
**JAMIE KAMINSKI**

- Lead policy advisor for "Zero Waste Canada" & President of "HSR Zero Waste".
- International speaker with over 30 years experience in the waste diversion industry.

**OUR PANEL**

- Members of the community will share their personal experiences trying to reduce waste.

**LEARN ABOUT:**

- What governments and corporations need to do to manage the waste problem.
- Specific actions that you can take to reduce waste in your life.

**PLUS:**

- A Question & Answer period will follow the presentations.

**FREE WEBINAR, REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED**

Register at: [nvecoboosters.com](https://nvecoboosters.com) or <https://bit.ly/missionwaste> or Scan:





## National Drive Electric Week (NDEW) 2023!

**A**re you curious about electric vehicles? If you want to see a variety of models and talk to owners, here's your chance.

As part of the National Drive Electric Week activities, WREVA, the Waterloo Region Electric Vehicle Association, is hosting an event on Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at The Boardwalk (Medical Centre 1&2 North Parking Lots), 430 The Boardwalk, Waterloo, ON. This will be the largest NDEW Meet-Up of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in Canada in 2023. Already there are 52 EV's registered representing 19 different models. This is a great opportunity to learn about EV's and their operation, including charging, from local EV owners. Attendees can also get information about incentives that can be applied to new and used EV's.

Here's a link to get more information: [tinyurl.com/NDEW2023](https://tinyurl.com/NDEW2023) Registration is necessary if you plan to participate by sharing your experience and showing your EV.



NDEW 2022 The Boardwalk Waterloo

### Faith Climate Justice Vigils Fridays From 8pm–9pm, Waterloo Public Square

Sept. 1 – Dec. 15

**I**n early December, world leaders will gather at the UN climate conference in Dubai (UN COP 28) to set commitments to try to limit further climate change. In response, our community will host weekly climate vigils in the lead-up to this event, where the decisions made will greatly influence our global trajectory and our common future. Join us for gatherings of grief and hope. For further details, visit: <https://bit.ly/climate-vigils-wr>

## Trees Were Our Super Heroes

*Commentary by Larry Kryski, B. Eng.*

**U**ntil the superheated summer of 2023, trees had become super heroes in the eyes of many Canadians. They have many amazing “super” features—they have beauty; they can provide cooling with shade; they offer us food in the form of fruit, syrup and nuts; they create oxygen from carbon dioxide; they help us celebrate (for example, Christmas trees); they can help restrict landslides and avalanches; they house us as well as many birds and animals; they can warm us in winter as firewood; provide us with the basis for many tools (What's a shovel or axe without a handle?); they have allowed us to sail the seas and explore the heavens with flight; and most recently, we have started to look to trees as an important solution to global warming by sequestering CO<sub>2</sub> in large quantities.

Unfortunately, trees, like super heroes have vulnerabilities... Achilles tendons so to speak. For Superman, it is kryptonite. Trees? Well, it is drought, fire and wind and most parts of the country have had copious quantities of each this summer.

Yes, this year has been a year like no other in the modern history of Canada. It looks like the future will be for hotter, drier and longer wildfire seasons. This process becomes part of a feedback loop making the whole process more severe.

Drought and wind will result in more lightning and lightning is the principle ignition source for wildfires—60-85% depending on the region.

We have always had wildfires in Canada but as we are working so hard to cut CO<sub>2</sub> generation—particularly fossil fuel generated sources—wildfires can really mess with our efforts and progress.

So, organizations like Let's Tree Wilmot, become even more important to our climate protection efforts. But, even though they are planting **thousands of trees**, it is a mere pittance compared to the **tens of millions of hectares** burned this summer alone.

If we are to not slide back even more on our CO<sub>2</sub> reduction efforts, we need to be speedy in expanding our early detection of all forest fires, not just wildfires and be able to hit them quickly while they are still small. There is lots of room for all the genius that this country can generate or for that matter, the world.

On top of that process, we need to seriously explore how we can sensibly apply science and engineering to reverse global warming.

We have some remarkable resources at our disposal these days compared to when I was a child. Fast computers, televisions/monitors, sophisticated communications, windmills, solar cells, advanced nuclear technology, and amazing tools (examples such as lasers, radars, fibre optics, ultrasonics, digital 3D printing... the list is very large). So why are we waiting to use all this remarkable capability? Absolutely everything required to solve global warming is in Canada—except maybe the will and the leadership.

# NVEB Continues to Protest Development On the Greenbelt and Expansion of Sprawl

by Dorothy Wilson

Over the last several months, members of the Nith Valley Eco-Boosters (NVEB) have continued to meet regularly with other environmental activists from Waterloo Region and the surrounding areas to share information and plan actions related to the provincial government's plan to allow development on the Greenbelt.

Lyndsay Dajka and Dorothy Wilson from the NVEB were part of a planning team that organized rallies on April 2nd and July 29th. The April rally saw about two hundred citizens, joined by federal, provincial and municipal politicians, gather along King Street North with a variety of signs to express their concerns about recent government actions including Bill 23, plans to develop the Greenbelt, and overturning of



Regional Official Plans. (Halton Region and Hamilton have been directed to expand their urban boundaries, going against their desire to protect farmland and to create sustainable, affordable communities.) Passers-by responded enthusiastically to the rally participants' signs and chants showing their support by honking their horns and waving.

Before dispersing, those in attendance heard inspiring words from a number of speakers



status of the Region of Waterloo's Official Plan, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved it in mid-April but, unfortunately, with some modifications including opening up hundreds of hectares of undeveloped land for new homes and businesses breaching the countryside line.

including Mike Marcolongo of the Greenbelt West Coalition; Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Ontario Green Party; Waterloo MPP Catherine Fife, Kitchener-Centre MP Mike Morrice; Kitchener Councillor Debbie Chapman; National Farmers Union President Jenn Pfenning; Kevin Thomason from the Grand River Environment Network; and NVEB Youth Advocate, Lyndsay Dajka.

As an update to the

Shortly after that announcement, Bill 97 and Provincial Policy Planning Changes were introduced in the legislature. A disturbing feature of this news was that farms could be subdivided up to three times. Considering that 319 acres of farmland are already being lost in Ontario every day, this change could spell disaster for our agricultural industry not to mention food security in the years ahead. Our contacts were encouraged to respond to





the Environmental Registry of Ontario with their concerns about this plan. When the deadline for responding was moved back from early June to early August, the rally planning team decided to organize an event that would highlight this latest attack on our farmland and natural areas, and encourage people to take action.

The “Rally Against The Big Sprawl” was planned for Saturday, July 29th. The organizers were concerned about attendance with the date being mid-summer when lots of people are away on holidays or otherwise engaged. In addition, the heavens opened in the morning to a significant rainfall which was worrisome. By early afternoon, when people were starting to gather for the rally along University Avenue between Westmount and Seagram Drive, the sun came out making it a perfect day for the well over 100 hundred people who showed up. The crowd was representative of many different community groups including Hold The Line, Grand River Environment Network, Nith Valley EcoBoosters, Council of Canadians, Waterloo Nature and Acorn Tenants Union.

After spending time walking up and down the street waving signs and cheering to inspire those driving by, the crowd gathered at the bandshell to hear speeches that passionately described what the



problems are with the current provincial government’s actions. Basically, despite the promise to address the housing crisis, the government is on track to increase sprawl; enable developers to get very rich; and leave those needing affordable housing out in the cold. In addition, farmland and natural areas are threatened and climate change is not being addressed.

Speakers included Waterloo MPP Catherine Fife, Maribel Jagorin of ACORN Tenants Union, Sam Nabi of Hold The Line, Kitchener-Centre by-election candidates Aislinn Clancy and Debbie Chapman. National Farmers Union President Jennifer Pfenning, who was unable to attend, sent written remarks stating that we cannot afford to lose anymore farmland in a climate crisis. Leader of the Ontario NDP Party Marit Stiles

joined the event and gave a fiery speech about the need for the government to do a far better job on affordable housing and protecting the environment.

It was very rewarding for EcoBoosters Lyndsay and Dorothy to be part of these successful rallies. The work continues though. More rallies are in the works across the province. Recently Ontario’s Auditor General and Integrity Commissioner have both released reports that revealed questionable processes with regards to the way lands have been removed from the Greenbelt. The Nith Valley EcoBoosters will continue to keep abreast of this serious situation and share information and suggested actions with their followers.

—Photos by Kevin Thomason



Nith Valley EcoBoosters



# Let's Tree Wilmot Set for 2023 Fall Planting And Great Plans for 2024

*By Marlene Knezevich*

Spring and summer have flown by. The leaves are turning colour and Let's Tree Wilmot is sharpening shovels, whacking in stakes in preparation for tree planting. Other things are happening too.

Here's a quick recap of what we have been up to in the past months: Our tree seedling bed is now up to 1645 seedlings and has been mulched. Some of last year's seedlings will be ready to be planted in 2024.

LTW is the proud owner of a used Dodge Ram truck, 'Billy', which has been outfitted with a tank and pump to water our trees. It was a scramble to get it all set up and work out the kinks for watering the trees in June. With the rainy July, Billy had a couple of outings and was then pressed into service during the heatwave this month. We also had Mike Yost, one of our volunteers, working part-time for Wilmot Township helping with watering and tree maintenance. We're grateful to Mike for outfitting Billy.

Tree Planting dates are Sept 30 and Oct 14 & 28. The first two plantings will be at Baden Hills and Oct 28 at the north west corner of Gingerich Road and Foundry Street in Baden.

The Region of Waterloo, which owns the Baden Hills property, has been prepping some of the grassy areas on the west side and the south border to become pollinator meadows. LTW will be adding trees in the other areas. For more details and to register for this planting, go to:

[www.eventbrite.ca/o/lets-tree-wilmot-34384003923](http://www.eventbrite.ca/o/lets-tree-wilmot-34384003923)

All of our events and activities are listed there.

On November 13, we host Fall Celebration. We invite the community to come out as LTW thanks our volunteers and we celebrate our accomplishments. Our speaker will be Mark Schwarz of Trees for Woolwich,

who will chat about their big project, The Habitats or Elmira Nature Reserve (67 acres).

Good news! Region of Waterloo Environmental Grant notified us that LTW is receiving \$6000. This grant will fund the tree planting project at the corner of Gingerich and Foundry in Baden.

LTW held three walks to explore our treescape in Wilmot Township. Our volunteer Louis Silcox led walks through Walker Woods and Schmidt Woods as well as an urban walk, New Hamburg Town Trees. In October, there will be a Pawpaw Parade in partnership with Carolinian Canada. Details will follow. What is a Pawpaw? Read about it at:

[www.ontario.ca/page/pawpaw](http://www.ontario.ca/page/pawpaw). There are three Pawpaws growing at Scott Park, New Hamburg, planted by LTW in October 2020.

The Education committee has created more videos and the latest ones are Weed Trimmer Damage to Tree Bark and a wonderful video Let's Tree Wilmot: About Us. Watch them and others on our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/@letstreewilmot7781](http://www.youtube.com/@letstreewilmot7781)

We are really excited to announce that LTW has its own website. Check it out: there are lots of resources, news and more.

We are always looking for someone like you to join our team. There are opportunities in promotions, as webmaster, in education, programs and events and we are open to new things!

Let's Tree Wilmot is a project of the Wilmot Horticultural Society.

Website: [wilmothortsociety.ca](http://wilmothortsociety.ca)

Email: [letstreewilmot@gmail.com](mailto:letstreewilmot@gmail.com) or

[wilmothortsociety@gmail.com](mailto:wilmothortsociety@gmail.com)

FB page: [www.facebook.com/letstreewilmot](http://www.facebook.com/letstreewilmot)

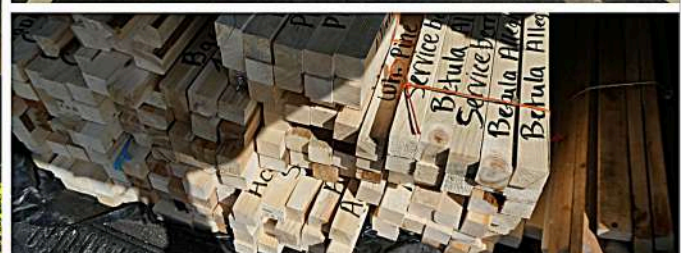
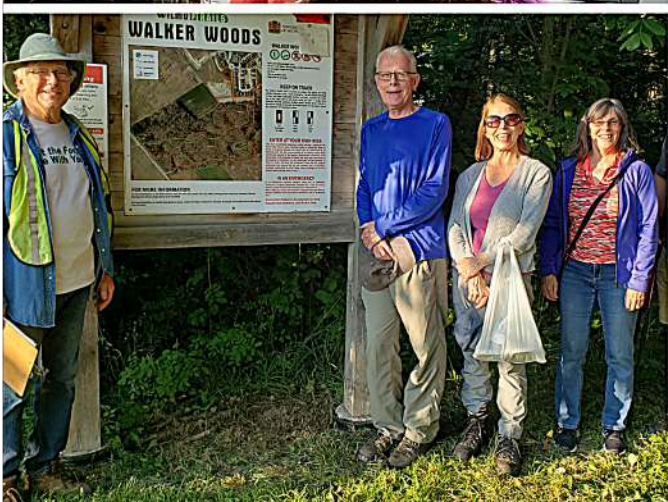






Scenes from Let's Tree Wilmot's 2023 planting experiences at a variety of venues with volunteers of all ages. The complexity of a successful planting process involves many individuals and good organizational strategies. With the climate warming, the acquisition of a pickup truck to support watering the trees after they are planted will improve long-term survivability of more trees, an often forgotten factor.

—Dean Peachey Photos





# Nith Valley EcoBoosters Visit Wilmot Family Resource Centre Children's Day Camp August 21, 2023

by Linda Lackey

All it takes is an idea, someone to plant a seed. That's how EcoBoosters had its beginning. Ten years ago, a young 17-year-old (Jocelyn Morton) approached some members of Zion United Church with her concern about climate change. Taking Jocelyn's challenge seriously, we started in earnest to educate ourselves and others about environmental issues. We encouraged others to walk, bike and carpool to school, work, and church. We tried a zero-waste challenge and made a conscious effort to turn off lights and electronics when not in use, put on an extra sweater rather than turning up the heat in our homes and became more deliberate about reducing, reusing, recycling, and refusing.

In 2015 our small environmental faith-based group hosted the film "Do the Math". The discussion that followed was vibrant and as a result more people wanted to become involved with EcoBoosters. We then became a community-based group.

Soon, we adopted the name Nith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) to reflect the beautiful river valley that winds

through Wilmot and Wellesley townships. We confirmed our commitment of achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships through education, action, and collaboration.

This summer, three members of Nith Valley EcoBoosters (Lyndsay Dajka, Dorothy Wilson, and Linda Lackey) were delighted to be invited to be the guests of the Wilmot Family Resource Centre children's day camp, where about 25 enthusiastic children heard the story of Nith Valley EcoBoosters. By engaging the children with the image of a seed that develops strong roots, sprouts leaves, flowers, and new seeds, they were invited to place leaves on the branches of the bush depicting the ways NVEB takes action to help support a healthy environment for all in our communities.

The children had the opportunity to play the "Water Game" an interactive co-operative game developed by the NVEB to teach the importance of water and protecting it. And as one young participant said, "I know what grey water is, it's used water from the laundry, showers and dish sink that can be used to water plants".

Can picking up litter be fun? –

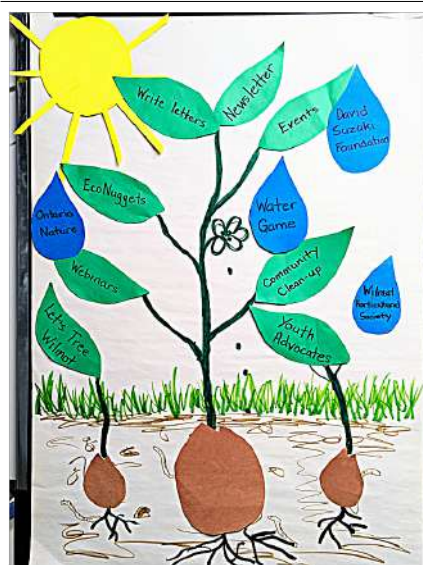
When it's a scavenger hunt, yes! The challenges came when the kids had to sort whether litter belonged in the recycling bin, garbage, or compost.

We were impressed by their knowledge of the potential dangers of plastic straws when not disposed of properly. The kids demonstrated creativity as they suggested ways in which some recycle items could be repurposed in new ways, like a jar and a perforated lid to collect bugs and other small critters. Take home activity sheets were offered to each of the children – to learn more about water and the environment.

Throughout the morning as the children learned more about protecting water as well as the environment, one child piped up and said, "sometimes I have to tell my mom and dad to turn off the lights". And later another participant came up to me and said, "Did you know I'm an NVEB Youth Advocate!" Another said "How do I become a NVEB Youth Advocate?"

Every good time needs a sing song, and we did that too, singing "Listen to the Water" complete with actions. A good time was had by all!

As the day progressed, NVEB members were impressed by the children's enthusiasm for knowledge of environmental issues and how they are already practising responsible habits for Green Bin and Blue Box recycling. Placing leaves on the bush (centre poster, below) they learned about Nith Valley EcoBoosters' local practices.





## Check Out Your Knowledge On a Few Questions from Our NVEB Water Game

1. *Why should you have a bucket with you when you take a shower?* a) To put on your head to keep your hair dry. b) To catch the cold water that comes out first so you can use it later. c) To practice your basketball shots with the soap.
2. *What's good about wetlands (swamps and marshes)?* a) They soak up water to control flooding. b) They provide food and homes for birds and fish. c) They clean the water before it soaks into the ground. d) Wow! Those are all great answers.
3. *How many litres of water are wasted if you let the water run for one minute while brushing your teeth?* a) 4 litres b) 8 litres c) 12 litres.
4. *Thinking about all of the uses of water in industry, what product do you think uses the most water to make?* a) a hamburger b) a lettuce salad.
5. *How long can a person live without water?* a) 1 week b) 3 days c) 2 weeks.



### Answers:

1. (b)
2. (d)
3. (b) That's the same as 16 disposable 500 ml. water bottles.
4. (a) It takes 700 gallons of water to make one hamburger.
5. (a) Some people have survived 8-10 days without water.

***YES – the Water Game is available to be used at schools, events, and other community activities.***

There is no fee to use the game, and we will do our best to have one or more Nith Valley EcoBoosters' members available to assist you with your event or activity. If you are interested, e-mail [nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com) and let us know what you are planning.

If you know of a young person who is eager to become a member of the NVEB Youth Advocates please send us an email at [nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com)





## Youth Advocate Leader Says Goodbye to NVEB And Heads to University

by Lyndsay Dajka

Climate action isn't always easy when you're a kid. Most actions are directed towards adults, leaving youth, who tend to be the most engaged in climate issues, unsure of how to make a difference. When I was younger, I spent years trying to find ways to take meaningful climate action. I changed my own habits, signed petitions, and even tried to email the Prime Minister, but I constantly had a feeling that I still wasn't doing enough.

That all changed in April 2021 when I joined the EcoBoosters, and at last, I found what I was looking for. As it ends up, the best way to take climate action does not have to be big – it can be right in your own community. Since joining the EcoBoosters, I have organized and hosted events, delegated to Council, and was even given the opportunity to co-create and lead the NVEB Youth Advocates. The Youth Advocates was such an amazing opportunity for me to take action on the climate crisis while growing my leadership skills and making new friends. I was able to make climate action more accessible to local youth than it had been to me. The work was never easy – starting a new initiative from scratch certainly has its challenges, especially when we were facing barriers such as starting up during the pandemic and often running headfirst into bureaucracy.

In the two years that I was running the Youth Advocates, it often felt like we were putting in much more effort than we were getting out of it, but I was always inspired to continue by the hope that the challenges we faced then would create more opportunities for the future Youth Advocates. As I leave the Youth Advocates



Lyndsay Dajka

now, I feel confident in the potential that this group could have. Slowly but surely, the Youth Advocates name has become more recognized in the community and school board. We have received recognition and support from not only the senior EcoBoosters, but also Kindred Credit Union, Smart Waterloo Region Innovation Lab, MP Tim Louis, and many more. This has opened so many doors for the Youth

Advocates and I hope it will make the road ahead much easier for future members of our group. I can't wait to see what they accomplish.

My favourite part about being a member of the EcoBoosters is its sense of community. Despite being much younger than many of the members, I always felt welcome in the group, and I enjoyed getting to know everyone. When I finally met some of the members in person for the first time, more than a year after joining the EcoBoosters, I already felt like I knew them so well. That community feeling carried forward onto the Youth Advocates, and I always looked forward to our Friday meetings, which were half planning projects, and the other half just enjoying each other's company. It was a space where we could share our frustrations about the climate crisis, laugh off some of our stress, and then turn it into action.

As I look back at over two years of working with the EcoBoosters, I leave with a feeling of immense gratitude. The EcoBoosters welcomed me into their group and provided me with so many opportunities to make a difference in my community. I have made friends and learned so many leadership and communication skills that will be an essential part of my future.

Whatever I do in the future, I will always remember my time with the EcoBoosters and everything it has taught me. This experience has made me the activist I am today, and I hope that as I continue the climate fight, I will make the EcoBoosters proud. Thank you for everything you have given me!

NVEB members expressed appreciation to four students for their dedication to the Youth Advocates group. The students, three of whom are moving on to university include Xuan-En Tan (below left), Emma Cote (missing) and Lyndsay Dajka (centre). Abby Potwarka (below right) is continuing on to Grade 12. Special recognition was given to Lyndsay



who got the group going and led it so capably over the last two years. Xuan-En and Abby were complimented on their creativity in support of the YAs – Xuan-En for the [promotional video](#) she created and Abby for her promotional poster. Gifts were presented to the outgoing YAs.

Xuan-En Tan and Emma Cote were recognized in the Waterloo Region Record as Standout students graduation from high school. —Kryski Photo



# Smart Waterloo Region Innovation Lab: A Hub for Youth Ideas!

From funding youth start-ups, to supporting youth-led gardens, to running youth groups and game shows, Smart Waterloo Region Innovation Lab (SWRIL) has one goal: Make Waterloo Region the best community in Canada for children and youth!

SWRIL is a youth-led innovation lab based at Communitech in Kitchener. They support and facilitate tons of youth-led experiments, projects, and initiatives. They also work on programs and tools that improve child and youth well-being in Waterloo Region.

Some SWRIL projects include:

- Nurture Community Gardens: Youth-led gardens across Waterloo Region that grow and distribute locally grown organic food.
- GIMI Impact: An innovation curriculum in Waterloo Region school boards that helps students develop solutions to real-world problems, present those solutions to others, and get funding to launch their ideas.
- Community Canvas: Youth-led and youth-designed murals across Waterloo Region. Plus, publishing the book “Memoirs of an Indian: A Guide to Surviving Colonialism” by [Sarah Siembida](#), Indigenous two-spirit upcoming author and Poet Laureate of Smart Waterloo Region.
- AI Chat bot: The Region of Waterloo’s first-ever AI chat bot that will be housed on the [Family Compass Waterloo Region](#) website.
- Impact Map: An interactive tool to seamlessly integrate, layer, and edit maps - with a goal to improve child & youth well-being.
- Free, fun events for youth, and more!

Smart Waterloo Region Innovation Lab is especially excited to engage with youth living in the Waterloo Region townships of Wilmot, Woolwich, Wellesley, and North Dumfries. This August, they hosted free game shows in Woolwich, Wellesley, and North Dumfries – and Wilmot game shows are coming this fall.

**Nith Valley EcoBoosters**



Youth working on a mural that illustrates their idea of “Happy & Respected.”

“It’s super exciting! As someone who grew up in Woolwich and the Waterloo Region townships, I’m looking forward to having something specifically for these youth. Each game show will be a night of fun, snacks, games and so many prizes! We hope that many youth hear about and have a chance to attend one of these game shows,” said Abigail, a SWRIL co-op student who will be organising and hosting these events.

Lots of youth from the townships are also regulars at the SWRIL Youth Group, which happens Wednesdays at 5 PM at Communitech. Youth group is totally free, and gives an opportunity for young people to meet new friends, brainstorm what they want from a youth group, and get volunteer hours.

Youth group is on a break until September, when it will come back with even more free food, activities, and prizes.

SWRIL doesn’t just run the game shows and youth group. There are fun, free youth events



Youth playing a word guessing game at the Youth Impact Survey launch party in April 2023.



happening every week! [Sign up for the SWRIL newsletter](#) or [follow SWRIL on Instagram](#) to hear about weekly events.

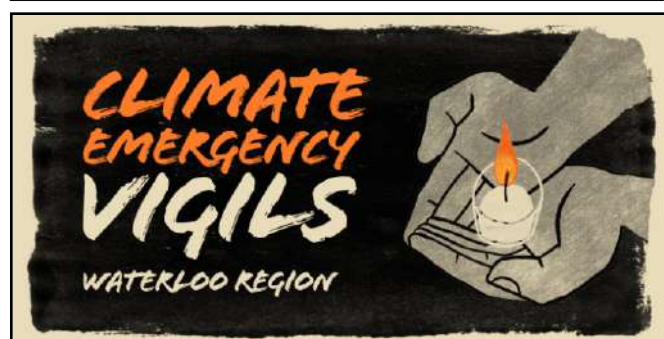
SWRIL wants to amplify the voices of youth living in Waterloo Region townships and support programming in these communities. If youth from townships have ideas for how to make their community better, SWRIL wants to help them to develop those ideas and discuss next steps. If youth living in townships have youth groups, SWRIL wants to hear about it & support however they can.

“[SWRIL] is the perfect place to unleash your creativity and work with others to make a difference in your community,” said Anna, a youth from Elmira. “You get the chance to explore new ideas and create something unique and help your community thrive and grow.”

To learn more about SWRIL, follow them on Instagram and Twitter [@SmartWatRegion](#). You can also subscribe to their email newsletter at their website: [swril.ca](#).



Youth in the Smart Waterloo Region learning about pollinators in the Nurture community garden at Rockway Public School.



### Climate Emergency Vigils

Friday's 8pm-9pm, Waterloo Square  
September 1 through December 15, 2023

**We are in a climate emergency** Acknowledging this, every Friday — Sept 1–Dec 15 — local organizers will hold space for gathering collectively to reflect on and process the weight of this immense reality.

Already global average temperatures have risen by more than 1°C above pre-industrial levels, caused by human activity. Consequences include increased forms of extreme weather, including the early and extensive wildfires, floods, heat and droughts here in Canada and around the globe.

**Divest Waterloo**

<https://bit.ly/climate-vigils-wr>

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Free events for youth

Investing in youth ideas





On a beautiful April day, a group from NVEB went on a garlic mustard pull at the west end of Schmidt's Woods, Baden. From the left: Yvonne Zyma, Patty Clarke, Marlene Knezevich, Linda Lackey and Tom Knezevich. —*Marlene Knezevich photo*

## Electric Vehicles — Do You Have a Question? Ask the Owners!!

*by Tom Knezevich*

Many changes related to Electric Vehicles (EV's) have occurred in the two years since the Nith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) hosted their first webinar focused on this subject. The technology has evolved, the variety of EV's being produced has increased, and the interest in and demand for this type of transportation has escalated. As a result, NVEB decided to host this 2nd free EV webinar on March 21st, 2023. 111 people registered for the event which began with an update on the current state of EVs presented by Neil Lackey. Following the update, Neil discussed his "on the road" experiences driving with his wife Linda from Ontario to Newfoundland round trip in a Chevy Bolt in July of 2022.

Neil's presentation was followed by short presentations from EV owners Julie Jutzi, Erik Stephens, Ashley Van Andel, and Ian Graham who spoke about their experiences as owners of a variety of EVs. This webinar featured an extended Question & Answer period which allowed time for the speaker panel to answer all questions posed by participants.

A recording of the webinar can be found at: <https://youtu.be/6HiyCDc4iaA>

In addition, a resource document is also available at: <https://bit.ly/3FQ4cgC> This document includes:

- EV terminology definitions.
- Information about typical concerns that people have about EVs.
- Links to various websites and articles providing additional EV information.
- Contact information for some of the panelists who participated in the webinar.
- A link to a copy of the keynote speaker's slide presentation.
- A link to a document summarizing the questions asked during the Q&A period of the webinar. In addition to the verbal answers given during the webinar, some additional written responses are included in this document.





Are You  
Environmentally  
Conscientious?

**Nith Valley  
EcoBoosters  
seeks new  
members  
to take the path  
toward a safer  
environment...**

[nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com)

### About Nith Valley EcoBoosters

Nith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) is a not-for-profit volunteer organization committed to achieving and supporting long-term healthy environments in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships. Environmental goals are achieved through education, action and collaboration.

Formed in 2013, NVEB was an ad hoc committee at Zion United Church in New Hamburg. In June 2015, the Nith Valley EcoBoosters became a community-based group adopting its current name.

The NVEB usually meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, except December. Monthly meetings are open to interested individuals. Subcommittees and working groups are established for various topics, issues or proposals as required. These groups may meet at any time, at any location and are in addition to regular monthly meetings.

Pre-pandemic, the Nith Valley EcoBoosters has organized or participated in multiple environmentally related events each year. It has been an active supporter of most regional environmental groups and activities.

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters is funded by donations, fundraising efforts and grants. Membership fees are not collected.

### Contact Information

<http://www.nvecoboosters.com>

[nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com)

## NVEB 'EcoNuggets' — The Latest Solution



### EcoNugget

### Talking to your kids about climate change

- Educate yourself. Check out this link: <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/what-is-climate-change/>
- Talk about what you are doing to help the planet and what you can do together.
- Ask questions to find out their thoughts about climate change.
- Acknowledge that feeling anxious, sad, angry and frustrated are appropriate responses that can lead to us taking action.
- Share information about how collective action helps people cope with their feelings and can achieve results.
- Spend time with your kids in nature. It will inspire them to protect it as they grow older. In addition, it benefits them emotionally and cognitively.

#### References:

<https://davidsuzuki.org/living-green/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-climate-change/>

<https://ourkidsclimate.org/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-climate-crisis/>

### For further information contact:

[nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com)

### MEMBERSHIPS

#### The NVEB are Members of

- **GREN** (Grand River Environment Network), a collective of environmentalists in Waterloo Region that work on a variety of issues.
- **Future Ground Network**—An online organizing resource, associated with the David Suzuki Foundation. It is a convenor & mentor for community environmental groups.
- **Nature Network**—A province-wide network of groups and individuals that are a collective voice for conservation.
- In addition, since 2015, the Nith Valley EcoBoosters have collaborated with the **Waterloo Region Blue Dot Team** to promote the rights of all Canadians to a healthy environment. <https://bluedot.ca>