

iYES Environmental Sustainability Proposal:

Protect Ottawa's Water (POW)

Canada is a country that has 20% of the world's total freshwater resources. However, only 7% of this water is renewable, the rest is in the form of glaciers and underground aquifers. This means that once this water is used up, communities will no longer have access to this water. This problem is compounded by the fact many Canadians abuse the use of water by using more than they need and allowing water that could be recycled for other uses to literally "go down the drain". In Ottawa, there are many different sources of water but it is important to improve how we use water so that future generations will have access to clean and pure water.

The problem of protecting water as a resource has been approached by the City of Ottawa and various local NGOs. In the past the City of Ottawa has worked to use water more efficiently, purify water being sent back into the ecosystem, and various NGOs have worked together to clean up and protect local water sources. Although improvements have been made, there are still stresses being put on Ottawa's water sources. Many of these stresses are due to the water that is wasted by many local residents. Due to these factors, we have decided our NGO should focus on education, reducing strain on water sources, and adopting a local water source in order for students to build a connection to the environment.

Our NGO will be named POW (Protect Ottawa's Water) and it will have three main goals. Firstly, we will unite three local schools in order to develop a clean up

program for the Pinecrest Creek. This is a local water source that flows near three local schools: Bishop Hamilton Montessori, Woodroffe High School, and St. Daniel Elementary School. Secondly, we will partner with a local home improvement store such as The Home Depot and organize a workshop on how to install and use rain barrels. Finally, POW will research ways that schools and individuals can save water and provide this information to parents and community members who attend school functions.

POW will be based out of the Junior High program at Bishop Hamilton Montessori School. Therefore, it will have access to computers, web resources and teachers who can act as advisors. Furthermore, the City of Ottawa offers a \$5,000 grant for educational initiatives associated with programs to improve surface water and groundwater quality. Also, The Home Depot provides community grants to community based improvement projects up to \$5000. POW intends to apply for these grants. Finally, Bishop Hamilton has access to many student volunteers, parents and alumni who will be able to help complete our local projects.

There are two local NGOs that should be able to help us design and implement our projects. The first is Ottawa Riverkeeper, which is an organization that works to protect the Ottawa River and its tributaries. Since the Pinecrest Creek flows into the Ottawa River, it is a natural partner. We will enlist their help to create a plan to clean up and maintain the health of our local water source. In addition, POW will work with the University of Ottawa Institute of the Environment in order to find a professional who can discuss the benefits of installing rain barrels on private property and explain how they are best used.

Bibliography

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