

Greening in Faith Communities



Ten Community Profiles

Greening Sacred Spaces 2008



Faith & the
Common
Good



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Bahá'í Community of Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario



Community Overview: The Ottawa Bahá'í community has approximately 1000 members who meet in nine sectors across the region.

Building: Converted in April 2007 from a 30-year-old restaurant to a community centre, the new Baha'I facility houses a library, kitchen, bookstore and meeting rooms.

Greening Story: Internationally, the Bahá'í community participates in such ecological forums as the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In Ottawa, however, no formal environmental committee existed until 2005, when Baha'I Diana Cartwright was appointed by the Spiritual Assembly to lead a Green Team. Since then a major focus has been to engage Ottawa Bahá'ís in reflection on the spiritual and moral dimensions of climate change and encourage environmental action. This was done through devotional programs at religious feasts, promotion of the One Tonne Challenge, and distribution of CFLs with the GSS Project Porchlight initiative. Efforts culminated in autumn 2007 with the organizing of an international conference on the spiritual dimensions of climate change. The event included a special celebration, co-sponsored by Faith & the Common Good, which attracted more than 200 participants. Renovation of the new community centre has also been a major greening focus and despite a limited budget many measures were taken, including efficient lighting, low VOC paints, low flush toilets in a new accessible

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Greening Practices:

- Green cleaning products now in use at the centre.
- Centre participates in the City's Yellow Bag program: garbage bags are purchased but recycling is picked up for free to encourage waste reduction.

Outreach:

- Bahá'ís hosted a major conference on the spiritual dimensions of climate change, 120 attendees.
- Prayers and readings at Nineteen Day Feasts across the city focused on the sacredness of nature.
- Promoted the One Tonne Challenge
- Gave out CFLs to households
- Organizers for Ottawa World Religion Day in 2005, which focused on the environment.
- Sponsored a Junior Youth awareness and training weekend on ecological awareness and action.

BUILDING RETROFITS

Lighting:

- Efficient lighting installed throughout the building.
- Timers installed on exterior decorative and security lighting to turn them off late at night.

Insulation:

- Insulation repaired and improved during renovations with vapour barriers added in places.

Windows & Doors:

- Old, damaged windows replaced with thermal units

Water Systems:

- Low flow toilet installed in accessible washroom.

Other:

- Bike rack provided for cyclists
- Building easily accessible by public transit.
- Low VOC paints used during renovations.
- A large sink and generous cupboards added in the kitchen to encourage the use of reusable dishes

washroom, and a kitchen designed to promote recycling and dish washing.

Future plans: Replacing the rooftop gas-fired HVAC system, and installing low flush toilets and touchless taps in the main washrooms are priorities.

Lessons Learned: The Green Team noticed that the focus of the Baha'I conference on climate change around the world was helpful in building peoples' capacity to take action locally. Many attendees reported that they've since gained the courage to speak up more about ecological crisis.

Congregation Darchei Noam

Toronto, Ontario



Community Overview: A Reconstructionist Synagogue that represents a close-knit community of more than 370 families.

Building: A 40-year old synagogue, recently renovated with a 2nd floor and lobby added. The structure is partly brick (insulated and stucco) and partly stone.

Greening Story: When the Congregation Darchei Noam opted to buy a building in 2003 - after thirty years of worshipping in rented space - decisions on how to renovate their new home were guided by the Jewish principles of Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) and Bal Tashchit (do not waste). A volunteer committee that included a member-architect led the design process, which incorporated solar panels, energy-efficient lighting, tankless hot water and R20 insulation. Speakers' nights were organized to educate the membership about why these greening initiatives were important, and related programming was linked to holidays like Hanukkah, when 250 CFLs were distributed to encourage people to model the modern-day miracle of light. Through recent GSS events, members of Darchei Noam have connected with people of other faiths and learned from similar work being done in other sacred spaces. Several local synagogues and Jewish organizations have since come together to form buying clubs for green supplies, and generally support one another in working to raise awareness in the broader Jewish community.

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Greening Practices:

- Diversion of all recyclable and organic materials.
- Non-disposable dishes and cutlery.
- Eco-friendly bathroom, office, kitchen supplies.
- On-going reviews of building systems and practices.

Outreach:

- Speaker and film series on environmental issues.
- More than 250 CFLs distributed at Hanukkah.
- Youth are encouraged to make the environment part of their mitzvah projects.

BUILDING RETROFITS

Lighting:

- CFLs installed throughout the building.
- Zone control allows lighting only for areas in use.
- Plentiful windows mean daylight replaces artificial

Insulation:

- R20 insulation on new and existing exterior walls

Renewable Energy:

- Solar panels on south-facing portion of rooftop.

Windows & Doors:

- Low "E" window units replaced existing windows.
- Original stained glass windows were augmented with sealed units to improve efficiency.
- Operable windows were installed in new spaces to reduce spring and fall heating and cooling needs

Heating & Cooling:

- High efficiency rooftop heating and cooling units.
- Zoning sections allow for heating or cooling only in areas that are in use.
- Heat recovery system reclaims heat from return air
- CO2 sensors optimize fresh air intake by ensuring outside air is brought in only as required.

Water Systems:

- Motion-detection activated sinks and low-flush toilets and urinals
- Instant hot water eliminates hot water tanks.

Other:

- Location allows for easy of access via transit.
- Bike racks encourage alternative transportation.
- Retention of existing building and foundations in lieu of new construction to reduce landfill waste.

Future plans: Darchei Noam working groups are researching green office practices, a scent-free policy, and a "green simcha" document that will recommend ways to incorporate local and organic food, products and green florists into the services and spaces of the synagogue. Another group will recommend ways to operate the building in an environmentally respectful manner.

Devi Mandir

Pickering, Ontario



Community Overview: A Hindu community founded in 1988, with a current active membership of about 1000.

Building: Built in the 1997 with highly insulated frame construction walls, the Temple houses a large prayer hall, a kitchen, dining hall and assembly space, and an apartment for a resident priest.

Greening Story: Many members at Devi Mandir have an interest in the environment, but no formal ‘green’ committee was formed until one of the temple directors attended a David Suzuki lecture in 2006. There, a member of Faith & the Common Good told him about Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS). Soon afterwards the Board elected to join GSS and establish a Green Team made up of youth representatives and two Board members. The youth were chosen for their enthusiasm, for how they served as examples of sustainable living, and if they would spread the message to their schools and homes.

The Green Team reached out to the temple membership through awareness-raising seminars and workshops. One of the first projects was to organize waste separation at the weekly meals served after worship. Typically, hundreds of community members gather for these meals. (On festivals the number can be greater than a thousand.) By separating compostables and recyclables,

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Greening Practices:

- Waste from weekly meals now separated into recyclables and compostables.
- Water in pitchers served instead of drinks in tins.
- Flowers used in services are now composted.
- Garbage pickup down from \$2,464 to \$820/year
- Locally sourced food purchased where possible.

Outreach:

- Distributed the *GSS Energy Action Planner* and showed the GSS video during regular services.
- Promoted the initiative on Geetanjali TV (CHEX), Shabnam Radio (AM770) and CBC radio.

BUILDING RETROFITS

Lighting:

- Replaced all low efficiency lighting with CFL’s, reducing bills from \$5,500 to \$1,300/yr.

Weather Stripping:

- Caulked around all exterior doors and windows.
- Major leak around south veranda overhang fixed.

Renewable Energy:

- Solar powered light standard in the parking lot.

Heating & Cooling:

- A team of qualified HVAC professionals from the congregation ensure optimum maintenance.
- Programmable thermostats with setbacks installed.

Water Systems:

- 7 low-flush toilets and a low-flow shower in priest’s apartment have reduced water use by 10%.

weekly waste was cut from four bags to one. Later, an energy audit revealed air leaks equal to a 3-foot hole in a wall. A GSS Audit Report made several recommendations. A lighting retrofit, extensive air sealing, low-flush toilets, and several other retrofits have since been implemented. Solar-powered lighting was also installed in the parking lot.

Future Plans: Priorities include fundraising for more solar panels, replacing inefficient fridges, and installing an entrance vestibule to cut heat loss caused by door openings.

Lessons Learned: Green Facilitator Cecil Ramnauth notes that it would have been useful to talk to other faith communities about greening activities and potential funding, but in 2006 the GSS network wasn’t as well developed as it is now.

First Unitarian Congregation
Waterloo, Ontario



Community Overview: Founded in 1956, First Unitarian has 150 congregants.

Building: The congregation moved here in December of 2007. The building dates from 1964, with 1969 and 1978 additions. The structure is wood-frame, cement block, and stone, heated by the original 1964 gas boiler.

Greening Story: First Unitarian’s first green committee was formed in the ‘90s, but activity had slowly dwindled over time. In 2007, interest was revitalized by local seminars offered by Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS). Keen to begin life in their new larger home in an environmentally-aware manner, several congregants started attending GSS meetings. They formed a Green Team and in June distributed a survey to assess the congregation’s interest in such options as an energy audit, green purchasing, native plantings, composting, bike racks, and a ban of single-use water bottles. The most favourable responses were for bike racks, green purchasing, and an energy audit. It

took some time to identify the perfect bike rack, but eventually one was created by a local iron crafter for \$300. Other first



Bike rack installed. spring 2008

steps included a

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Greening Practices:

- A composter was obtained from the City and installed on the grounds, and the kitchen has been outfitted with a compost collection bucket.
- A green purchasing policy is in development.

Outreach:

- A special Sunday service was held, centred on the Greening Sacred Spaces video.
- A course is being planned on the links between spirituality and environmental responsibility.

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Audit:

- A walk-through audit identified options such as replacing the boiler, installing storm windows, a lighting retrofit, and more. The resulting table of priorities will inform decisions over the next year.

Other:

- A bike rack has been installed and is in active use.

spring clean up of the grounds and obtaining a composter from the City. Because they knew their budget would be limited in the short term, the green team chose not to pursue a full audit right away. Instead, a team member invited a colleague who does audits for the Region to do a walk-through audit. He provided a table of energy-saving priorities, including a new boiler, a lighting retrofit, low flush toilets and storm windows.

Future Plans: A green purchasing policy is in the works, as well as a two-evening course on the links between spirituality, ethics, and environmental responsibility. Other actions will soon be planned, guided by the priority list from the walk-through audit.

Lessons Learned: It can be challenging to fit energy-saving measures into a budget already stretched by a larger facility, but much can be done at minimal expense and sometimes the savings can pay for the cost.

“My favourite part was finding the bike rack installed. The next Sunday my husband and I rode our bikes to church - along with a whole lot of other people. The rack was already full, well before the service began!”

Felicia Urbanski, Interim Minister

Hillcrest Mennonite Church
New Hamburg, Ontario



Community Overview: A Mennonite fellowship founded in 1964, with a membership of approximately 250.

Building: Constructed in 1964 with an addition built in 1990. The structure is brick, heated by three forced air gas furnaces and some supplemental electric baseboards.

Greening Story: When environmental concerns emerged as a theme at Hillcrest’s Annual Meeting, in 2007, a Green Facilitator position was created on the Facilities and Administration Team to better inform decisions made about upcoming capital projects. Rob Yost was appointed to the job and one of his first steps was to attend a Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) meeting in Waterloo where he learned about grants available for energy audits. An audit seemed the perfect starting point to address the congregation’s concerns.

Through the audit, the community learned that their energy use rated well compared to other churches in similar climate zones, due to the building being relatively new. Even so, the audit offered many useful suggestions for improvement, along with estimates for the costs and savings.



photo: Rob Yost

Volunteers insulate the attic

The Facilities Team voted to pursue most of them, rejecting only a few that seemed impractical or had extremely long payback periods. Most of

COMMUNITY ACTIONS
<p>Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed 100 CFLs as part of advent celebration
BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS
<p>Lighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaced incandescent lighting with CFLs. • Replaced exit sign bulbs with LED bulbs.
<p>Insulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insulated the part of the ceiling accessible from the attic space with fiberglass batts to R40. • Insulated the exterior wall in the basement furnace room to R12.
<p>Weather Stripping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather-stripped two attic access hatches. • Installed foam gaskets behind electrical outlets and covers on outlets not in use
<p>Heating & Cooling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed programmable thermostats and programmed setbacks when areas are unoccupied. • Educated people using rooms with baseboard heaters to turn them down after use.
<p>Appliances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaced fridge with energy star equivalent
<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed an insulating blanket on the water heater and insulated the first six feet of pipe.

the work could be done by volunteers, so a workday was scheduled for their annual spring cleaning day on April 20.

Future Plans: Yet to be completed from the audit is upgrading the rear door with high performance glazing and finishing the attic insulation. One idea for future consideration is skylights for when the sanctuary roof is replaced, to reduce electric lighting.

Lessons Learned: According to Yost, some were initially sceptical about the usefulness of an audit, expecting the recommendations to be farfetched and expensive. In the end, though, most suggestions had reasonable costs, and the projected savings made it easy to decide which to pursue and in what order of priority. To get the best prices, Yost also found it was helpful to explain the project to local businesses. Great savings on CFLs were offered by the local Home Hardware store.

Holy Cross Parish

Ottawa, Ontario



Community Overview: A Roman Catholic parish founded in 1966. Approximately 2000 persons attend regularly.

Building: Constructed in 1969, the structure includes a sanctuary, offices, and parish hall. The structure is brick on a wood frame.

Greening Story: Greening activities at this parish were first initiated by the Mission, Peace & Development Committee in the spring of 2006. Member John Dorner was appointed Green Facilitator and one of his first steps was to attend a Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) meeting where he learned about grants available for energy audits. After consulting with the Property Committee and the Finance Committee, he received approval to have one done, and the audit was completed in the fall of 2006. In February 2007, the Finance Committee approved up to \$12,000 for upgrades, focusing on the auditor's top priorities of a lighting retrofit and installation of variable frequency fans for the HVAC system. Together these offered estimated utility savings of 17%. The auditor suggested contacting Energy Ottawa to manage the retrofits, including pricing contractors, scheduling and quality assurance, so a call was placed to that firm. Meanwhile, Dorner started meeting with various parish committees to explore other opportunities for greening. A vibrant Green Team soon

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Greening Practices:

- Fair Trade Coffee now used at all events.
- Exterior Christmas lights replaced with LEDs.
- Through *Project Porchlight* 50 CFLs received at no cost and installed in the parish and rectory.

Outreach:

- Environmental Tip of the Week in each bulletin
- 450 GSS *Energy Action Planners* distributed for Earth Day, responses collected the following week.
- Services included a presentation about *Project Porchlight* one Sunday, and afterwards about 300 CFLs were distributed, one per household. Children and youth assisted in the distribution.
- Presentations to other faith communities regarding the process of involved in energy audit/retrofits
- Meetings with each committee of the parish to review environmental practices of each committee
- Bulletin board for green announcements and tips

BUILDING RETROFITS

Audit:

- A full energy audit of the building found potential savings of up to 42% on utility bills if all recommendations were followed.
- The Finance Committee has allocated \$12,000 for initial retrofits.

formed and began greening many aspects of parish life: Fair Trade coffee was introduced at parish events, LED Christmas lights were purchased, and in April 2008, mass services included distribution of 450 GSS *Energy Action Planners* (EAP) and CFLs for Earth Day. Data from the EAPs was collected the following week for the GSS program.

Future Plans: After some initial difficulties, meetings with Energy Ottawa were arranged. It is hoped that retrofits will begin soon and there are plans to use the savings from the first retrofits to invest in more over time.

Lessons Learned: Facilitator John Dorner notes that when dealing with a large group, not everyone is converted at once, but he can see the outreach having an impact. After completing the EAP, one parishioner told him she'd decided to buy an Energy Star fridge.

"This is a process that starts small and builds over time...." John Dorner, Green Facilitator

The Islamic Foundation of Toronto Scarborough, Ontario



Community Overview: This centre serves as a combined mosque, community centre and school. Some 2000 people attend Friday prayers, and many others access community programs. The school has over 600 students.

Buildings: Completed in 1992, the main building includes a mosque, ablution areas, elementary school, cafeteria, kitchen, gym and library. Next door a retrofitted commercial plaza houses the high school.

Greening Story: Green Team leader Azba Hathyani founded the Islamic Foundation's Green Team in September of 2006, when she was a Grade 12 student at the high school. She recruited an enthusiastic team of students to work with her, and together they decided on two major goals: one was to encourage energy savings in the community, and the second was to green the operations of the Foundation itself. To address the first goal, they conducted outreach inviting community members to a workshop about energy conservation techniques. A total of 25 households participated in the program, which included distribution of the Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) *Energy Action Planner (EAP)*. The team followed up carefully with each household, logging green activities and energy savings. In the end most households tracked savings between 20% to 70%. As for the second goal, the team wrote a proposal to the administration and succeeded in arranging for an Energy Audit of the two

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Greening Practices:

- Biodegradable cutlery in used at events, e.g. the weekly Hot Soup Days that feed over 700 people

Outreach:

- Organized a workshop on energy savings with 25 households participating. Afterwards energy use was logged and most showed savings of 20 to 70%.

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Lighting:

- All lighting has been retrofitted, with LED bulbs in exit signs, T12 magnetic ballasts upgraded to T8 electronics, and incandescents upgraded to CFLs.

Insulation:

- During repairs to the high school roof 2 inches of insulation was added, taking it from R20 to R30.

Weather Stripping:

- Windows in the high school building were caulked.

Water

- Aerators were installed on taps in the ablution area. Estimated savings 187 cubic meters/year.

Heating & Cooling:

- Programmable thermostats were installed

Appliances:

- An old chest freezer was replaced with an energy efficient model. Estimated savings \$65/year.

buildings, with GSS providing a grant of \$4,000 to cover the cost. The team accompanied the auditors as they assessed water use, air-leakage, heating/cooling, insulation and appliances. The Audit was completed in June 2007, and several recommendations have since been implemented, including water savings in the ablution areas, replacement of an old freezer, and two inches of insulation added to the school's roof.

Future Plans: Audit recommendations will continue to be implemented over time.

Lessons Learned: Azba Hathyani notes that, as a student, she had doubts whether she would be able to influence sustainable change. But once the Green Team was in place, with everyone committed to doing their best, things started to progress.

"At first you wonder, can I do it? But you just have to keep going and be patient. It's really worthwhile in the end"
Azba Hathyani, Green Team Leader

Polson Park Free Methodist Church
Kingston, Ontario



Community Overview: A Free Methodist congregation founded in 1959 with a current attendance of about 145.

Building: Dating from the 1960s, the main sanctuary is wood frame with brick facing. An all-brick addition dating from 1983 houses the fellowship hall and a daycare. Heating is by four natural gas forced air units.

Greening Story: Polson Park has no official greening committee, but several members have an active interest in the topic, and when a congregation member told the Buildings and Grounds committee about the grants available from Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) for energy audits, they quickly agreed it was something to look into. An application was submitted, and GSS agreed to provide \$1,500 for an audit, on the condition that an equal amount would be spent on retrofits. The audit was conducted in January of 2008, and included an assessment of heating, cooling, lighting,

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Heating & Cooling:

- Four new furnaces have been ordered at a cost of \$16,000. These will generate an estimated \$2,000 in savings every year.

Insulation:

- The audit recommends increasing attic insulation from R12 to R50 with blown cellulose insulation, and adding insulation to the basement walls to R14. Estimated savings \$1,000 a year.

Lighting:

- The audit recommends replacing all incandescent lighting in the Sanctuary with compact fluorescents, and replacing the T12 fluorescent tubes elsewhere with T8's with electronic ballast fixtures. Estimated savings \$1600 a year.

appliances and insulation. In March the auditor submitted his final report, which found that a \$34,000 investment in energy saving technologies and retrofits could generate nearly \$150,000 in savings over a 20 year timeframe. If all measures were acted on, the average payback would be eight years and greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by 24 tonnes a year (the equivalent of taking five cars off the road.)

Future Plans: Four new furnaces are already on order to replace the inefficient units currently in use. As money becomes available other audit recommendations will be implemented. It is anticipated the whole upgrade process will take two to three years

Lessons Learned: According to Rene Barnes, member of the Building and Grounds Committee, the process was very eye opening. They would have implemented more already, but a Fire Marshall's

inspection of their daycare has meant they have to invest in other upgrades first. As with all community sacred spaces, multiple priorities have to be balanced.

Recommendation Estimate**	% Savings of Total Bills	Estimated Savings per Year	Estimated Cost of Materials	Payback (Years)
Install a high efficiency Furnaces	25%	\$2,000	\$16,000	8.0
Add insulation to basement walls and attic	32%*	\$1,000	\$9,000	9.0
Install more efficient lighting	24%	\$1,600	\$7,500	4.7
Reduce Air Leaks	5%	\$500	\$1,500	3.0
TOTAL	38%	\$5,100	\$34,000	6.7

Key recommendations and estimated savings: Energy Report for Polson Park Free Methodist Church

Scarboro Foreign Mission Society
Scarborough, Ontario



Community Overview: A Catholic missionary society with fifteen staff onsite and 25 elderly residents. A retreat centre also averages 35 users each day.

Buildings: Three brick buildings built in 1923, 1956, and 1958. They include a chapel, offices, meeting rooms, a retreat centre, a cafeteria and a residence for retired and elderly priests. Total 80,000 ft².

Greening Story: The Scarboro Missions Green Team consists of Louise Malnachuk, House Coordination, and Vince Butler, Plant Manager. Their interest was first sparked in 2005 when Louise attended a meeting in Ottawa where energy conservation in religious buildings was discussed. She and Vince immediately replaced one of the facility’s oil furnaces with a mid-efficiency gas furnace. Keen to do more, they met with a GSS Rep and opted for an energy audit, for which GSS provided a \$3,500 grant. The first step was a GSS workshop with Scarboro Mission staff. Attendees were enthusiastic and offered several energy saving ideas, including making sure lights and computers were turned off when not in use, doors and windows were kept closed, and that the various groups that used the facilities were educated about energy conservation. During the audit blower door tests were used to find air leaks, and all lighting, heating, and appliances were assessed. The auditors

COMMUNITY ACTIONS
<p>Greening Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green cleaning products now in use.
<p>Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Scarboro Missions Magazine article was written on the greening initiative, 7,000 readers. • GSS <i>Energy Action Planner</i> distributed to 15 staff. • Main bulletin board now has a ‘green’ space.
BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS
<p>Lighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 500-watt pot lights changed to 25-watt halides • Magnetic ballast fluorescents switched for electronic ballast energy efficient tubes • Estimated electricity savings, 30% per year
<p>Insulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McRae and Fraser wings roof insulation increased. • Chapel roof Insulated.
<p>Weather Stripping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 stained glass windows and 12 doors air-sealed
<p>Windows & Doors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84 windows replaced with thermal units
<p>Heating & Cooling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One old furnace upgraded to mid-efficiency, another upgraded to high-efficiency.
<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion sensors in public washrooms for lights, fans

found potential savings between 44% to 51%, and the Mission Leadership Team soon approved \$15,000 in retrofits, including insulation, window upgrades, air sealing and a lighting retrofit. Some of the more expensive options await future financing.

Future Plans: A solar water heater will soon be installed to provide up to 70% of hot water needs for the residence and the kitchen (with 50% of the cost covered by federal and provincial grants, and a GSS grant covering another \$7,500.)

Lessons Learned: Government grants for such things as solar water heaters can take much longer to come through than planned.

Preventing further global warming by cutting down on energy use is both exhausting and exhilarating... you have to revise your priorities to ensure green activities take place. - Louise Malnachuk

St. Alphonsus Parish Peterborough, Ontario



Community Overview: A Roman Catholic parish with more than 500 active families.

Building: Constructed in 1960, the church is heated by a gas HVAC system installed in 2006, as well as supplemental baseboards.

Greening Process: The idea for a parish Green Team emerged in 2007, at meetings of their Development and Peace committee where members had noticed that many third world issues grew out of the first world's misuse of the environment. The group brainstormed ideas and a Green Team was officially struck in September of that year. The Team now has eight active members.

Early greening initiatives have included organizing parish events, distributing compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), selling stainless steel water bottles and reducing the use of disposables in the kitchen. In addition, volunteers from the parish with expertise in building systems worked with the Green Team to begin to assess energy use and prioritize changes. Green Facilitator Marie Press found that response in the parish has been generally positive. Through networking at local Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) meetings and events like Green Drinks, Green Team members have enjoyed making connections with other faith communities doing similar work. At GSS meetings they learned about

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Greening Practices:

- Use of disposable cups and plates reduced.
- A kitchen water filter was installed and pitchers bought to eliminate the use of bottled water
- Drop-offs for used batteries and ink cartridges.

Outreach:

- Some 500 CFLs were distributed, one per family, and announcements made about the benefits.
- Over 400 steel water bottles have been sold to parish members to discourage plastic bottles.
- A tour was organized of St Gabriel's, a Toronto church known as the 'greenest in North America'
- Guest speakers were brought in to discuss waste reduction, air quality and green cleaners.

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Lighting:

- Floodlights and incandescents have been replaced with various energy efficient bulbs.

Windows & Doors:

- A new door was not hanging properly, so the contractors were brought back to make it airtight.

Other:

- A bike rack was installed to promote cycling

grants available for professional energy audits. Building on what they had already learned about their building systems, they decided an audit made good sense. The audit was conducted in December 2007, and one of the major findings was from the blower door test that revealed air leaks equivalent to a 2.5 foot hole in the building, primarily due to leaky windows and gaps around ducts.

Future Plans: The next steps are to work on the audit recommendations, starting with the air sealing and other measures feasible by volunteers. Items for later consideration include drafting an environmental mission statement for the parish and buying green electricity from Bullfrog Power.

Lessons Learned: The Green Team has noticed that for outreach within the parish it helps to make themselves highly visible. When they started wearing special green T-shirts to parish events, they noticed people who were curious started asking many more questions.