

NATURAL CONNECTIONS

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1



WELCOME TO OUR FIRST EDITION!

Natural Connections is ACER's newsletter that is published four times a year and distributed to all members, donors, and sponsors. You can also find it on our website. It contains updates on ACER's activities, projects and events and includes bits of information that all nature enthusiasts will enjoy.

ACER receives Trillium Funding

ACER is pleased to announce that we received a substantial grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation to implement our new program, *Our School Yard-Measuring Our Resources* with schools in the Peel/Halton region. *Our School Yard* explores the relationship between trees on school grounds and global climate change in both elementary and high schools.

The project coordinator of *Our School Yard* (and first full time staff for ACER) is Maria Naccarato. "We are very grateful that Ontario Trillium Foundation recognizes the importance of environment education, and are confident that *Our School Yard* can benefit both educators and students through hands-on outdoor learning."

Our School Yard enhances participants' knowledge of climate change through a field study to collect and manage authentic data. Individual classroom data is then incorporated into ACER's database to be shared. The school community has the opportunity to locally address real world solutions to what is quickly becoming our globe's most critical environmental problem.



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Maria Naccarato

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Guest writers: Alice Casselman

Shivanie Fung

News In Brief

ACER GROWS

ACER has a new Project Coordinator for the Our School Yard Project. Maria Naccarato joined ACER in June. Maria is a recent graduate from the University of Toronto and has a degree in Biology and Forestry. Maria is also active in her community and has worked with youth with both City of Toronto and Toronto Community Hostel.

In other staff news, Ayesha Choudhery as a summer student from May to July. Ayesha assisted with outdoor monitoring events, organized our contacts database and helped plan our annual general meeting. Thanks Ayesha! We wish you the best of luck in the Biology Program at York University.



Maria Naccarato is excited to embark on her new journey as Project Coordinator for Our School Yard.

Humber Arboretum

Over 3000 students have been involved in planting, measuring and mulching in ACER's urban Climate Change Laboratory in the Humber Arboretum below Humber College North Campus in the northwest corner of Toronto. Beginning in 2002, trees representing 76 species and 2100 specimens were chosen to be measured annually. These trees were planted by students and volunteers in scientific biodiversity-sensitive designs to study the success rate over the long term in a warming global climate.

During May and October, students and volunteers come to measure each year's growth. Students from Grade 7 to Grade 12, environmental club members, new Canadian professionals and recent university graduates work with ACER to collect data for analysis. Data is provided to students, scientists, foresters and the public. Schools wishing to participate are supported through ACER by the variety of funders. Check the website for specific information on field work and community service opportunities.

ACER's AGM and new editions to the board.

On June 12, 2006, ACER held its annual general meeting at Mississauga Public Library. Many members attended and a slide show was presented updating this past years events.

ACER announced the addition of 2 new board members. Margaret Grouse RN has a history of community activism with an interest in environment health. Dr. Pedro Pereyca is our other new addition. He has a doctorate in chemistry and has developed innovative monitoring programs for Halton Catholic District School Board. ACER is excited to have these two members on board.

Volunteer News

Would you like to Volunteer?

ACER is always looking for new volunteers to help in the day-to-day operations of ACER. Here is a list of current opportunities with ACER:

- Tree Rescue
- Humber Arboretum Leaders
- Administrative Assistant
- Data Entry
- Our School Yard Mentors

If you would like more information on these positions please visit our website. If you would like to volunteer, please send your resume to info@acer-acre.org

VOLUNTEERING Testimonial

By Shivanie Fung

My name is Shivanie and I have been volunteering with a number of non-profit organizations who focus on environmental protection either through research or promoting awareness. I started volunteering with ACER in May of this year and it has been both an interesting and exciting experience for me. I have a background in Environmental Studies and enjoy field work so I jumped at the opportunity to participate in ACER's Spring *Lets' Plant Measure and Mulch* program.

The *Let's Plant Measure and Mulch* program entails measuring trees to assess their growth rate and applying mulch to conserve moisture. It has been a fun and interesting learning experience with a few challenges. Working with ACER has given me practical experience with measuring trees and I have learnt the technique of measuring both tall and short trees, designing quadrats, identifying and replacing tree tags, and identifying dead and missing trees. Working at the Biodiversity plot has also given me an opportunity to see some wildlife such as ducks, snakes, birds, rabbits and beavers that inhabit the area at or near the biodiversity plot and the Humber River. In addition, I have met some great people who made me feel comfortable and have made my volunteering experience really great.



Alice Casselman (top left) and Volunteers take a break at the Humber Arboretum.

Upcoming Events

General Announcements

ACER will be presenting Our School Yard during COEO annual conference (September 29-October 1st, 2006). ACER will be presenting a 1.5 hour introductory workshop on *Our School Yard*.

ACER's field season at the Humber Arboretum is October 17-November 3, 2006. If you are a teacher and would like your class to learn about the effects of climate change on biodiversity or would like to volunteer on our *Let's Plant* team please contact ACER at info@acer-acre.org. ACER provides support for transportation.

SUMMER INSTITUTE

ACER invites educators in the Peel/Halton area to our Summer Institute in which we will provide training on *Our School Yard-Measuring Our Resources*.

ACER has developed comprehensive environmental monitoring resources to support educators teaching environmental studies. As part of Our School Yard, ACER is holding a Summer Institute to provide training and support for implementation this Fall (2006). In this 3-day workshop, teachers will learn the applications for the curriculum, methods for accurate data collection and tips to integrate this exciting program into their classrooms.

Training dates:
Monday August 28th-
Wednesday August 30th, 2006.

Time: 9:00am-4:00pm

Location: Mentor College

40 Forest Avenue

Mississauga, ON

To register or for a complete outline of the summer institute please contact Maria Naccarato at ourschoolyard@acer-acre.org or 905-275-7685.

ACER would like to thanks its sponsors:

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Summer Institute Update

ACER is excited to announce that Dr. Don MacIver, Director of the Adaptation and Impacts Research Group, Environment Canada is our Guest Speaker for the Summer Institute. He has been Senior Science Advisor to Meteorological Services since 1994 with over 100 publications to date. He will be presenting a talk on biodiversity and climate change on the final day of the summer institute.

More ways to help ACER: New Membership

ACER offers the following annual memberships:

ACER Annual Membership

Adults: \$30/year

Retired members: \$20/year

Student: \$10/year

With this membership, member receives: electronic newsletter, annual report, membership pin and notice of annual general meeting.

ACER Membership Plus: \$50/year

You receive all the benefits that ACER Annual Membership receives as well as:

- monthly electronic updates on programs (i.e. Our School Yard)
- access to all manuals (electronic only)
- discounts for workshops and institutes

Supporter Membership: \$100/year

Everything mentioned in ACER Member Plus as well as...

- Supporter members receive a "Supporter Membership" certificate and ACER water bottle

Platinum Membership: \$500/year

Everything mentioned in ACER Member Plus as well as...

- Name listing in ACER's Annual Report
- Platinum members receive a "Platinum Membership" certificate and ACER bag

EQUIPMENT PURCHASING AND RENTAL

ACER offers BioBags for sale containing all the tools for a team of students working outdoors on trees, earthworms, blooms or birds. ACER also rents out measuring equipment as well as GPS units to community groups measuring their trees. Please visit our website for more Information.



Membership Form

Sign up for:	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Membership	\$30.00/year
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Membership (Senior Citizen)	\$20.00/year
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Membership (Student)	\$10.00/year
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership Plus	\$50.00/year
<input type="checkbox"/> Supportive Membership	\$100.00/year
<input type="checkbox"/> Platinum Membership	\$500.00/year

Subtotal: _____

Total: _____

Method of Payment

- | | |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money Order | _____ |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Express | _____ |

Name _____

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Phone _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. date _____

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*Please make cheques payable to ACER

**You may also register online

Mail the membership form to:

The Association of Canadian Educational Resources
 3665 Flameword Drive , Unit #44
 Mississauga, Ontario
 L4Y 3P5

Tree FALL

Have you read: It's the Crude Dude by Linda McQuiag or watched Al Gore's The Inconvenient Truth? Then tell us about it!

Tree FALL is our way of updating our members with interesting facts, trivia, book and movie reviews. We encourage anyone to submit a piece to acer-acre.org for future newsletters.



Look out for our new website this summer! Our improved website will be easier to navigate and have up-to-date information on all of our opportunities and news!

www.acer-acre.org