

Environmental non-profits teach kids how to grow up green

As life gets busy, we can forget to respect and protect the environment.

Recently, the Victoria Foundation hosted a meeting of environmental educators doing great green work in our community.

Victoria Active School Travel (VAST)

VAST partnered with HASTE (Hub for Action on School Transportation Emissions) to offer students an opportunity to increase their awareness about how they travel to school. A shift from car-based travel to active transport was encouraged and supported through the use of an online travel emissions calculator.

“Climate change can be perceived as overwhelming to students. HASTE provides fun, practical ways to do something about it, day by day, step by step,” says Shoshana Litman, a school travel consultant.

VAST members walk the talk and speak with passion and they want you to take notice. The Foundation grant will help VAST to continue encouraging active travel choices, reduce emissions and enjoy the benefits.

Victoria Natural History Society

A volunteer-run organization, the Society provides free school field-trips into nearby green spaces. Naturalists teach kids about the plants, animals and geology they encounter in the area so they learn to appreciate and better understand the beauty of the environment.

“The naturalists in our society want to create the next generation of nature lovers and these field trips are exactly how we are doing it!” says Darren Copley, president of the Victoria Natural History Society.



Local environmental projects help children become more in tune with the natural world around them, inspiring them with ideas and information about 'living green'.

Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)

HAT's *Green Spots* program works with Greater Victoria schools to create native plant gardens on school grounds. Teachers can use these gardens as outdoor classrooms and students can use them as a natural setting play area. The teachers involved also receive resources from HAT to use in their lesson plans.

The program's largest garden completed to date is at Keslet School on the Saanich Peninsula, where HAT led three sessions with teachers, students and administrators on

the garden design. On planting day, HAT helped six classes of students plant more than 200 native trees, shrubs and wildflowers!

“*Green Spots* is about creating opportunities for kids to get outside and explore nature in their neighborhoods,” says HAT's Executive Director, Adam Taylor. “This is an important part of a healthy childhood.”

Galiano Conservancy Association

The Galiano Conservancy's *From the Forest to the Sea* watershed education program is the cornerstone of its hands-

on educational work, unique in exploring all components of the basic ecological unit of the watershed – stream, lake, forest and sea.

Greater Vancouver and Victoria area students can participate in day-long programs offering integrated ecological education to youth aged five to 18, with a special focus on inner city and disadvantaged groups with little access to hands-on environmental education.

“This was the best field trip our students took this year,” said one excited teacher. “The kids are still talking about it!”

The Victoria Foundation is proud of its long-standing support of the region's charitable organizations from all sectors.



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