

Reep Green Solutions

Communications@reepgreen.ca

Local Charity Wins Grant to ‘Depave’ Kitchener School, the first Depave project in Waterloo Region

Depave Paradise (a program of Reep Green Solutions) will lead the community in transforming asphalt-covered areas of Sheppard Public School into a dynamic naturalized play space.

Kitchener, ON. On Sunday October 28, the Sheppard Public School community, with partners Reep Green Solutions and Green Communities Canada, will tear up unused pavement and create a naturalized green space for the children of Sheppard Public School. The project will capture rainwater, beautify our community, and showcase a more sustainable way to managed stormwater in urban areas through a program called Depave Paradise. This Depave project is part of an exciting new trend of neighbourhood workbees that renew underutilized, hard urban spaces.

Participants will liberate this area from asphalt and reclaim the space for nature play, creating the first ever ‘depave’ site in Waterloo region. “Hard surfaces, such as driveways, parking lots and buildings interrupt the natural water cycle by preventing rain water from soaking into the ground, thus creating heat island effects, and warming up our cities. By removing pavement and replacing it with native plants, trees and shrubs we are increasing the infiltration rate, recharging our groundwater supply, and cooling the schoolyard,” Becca Robinson, Landscape Designer for Reep Green Solutions explains.

Based on consultation with students and staff at Sheppard Public School, including a ‘Shade Audit’ by the Waterloo Region Public Health and in-class design workshops, the new play space will include native trees and shrubs to provide shade for students and natural objects, such as stumps, logs, and a naturalized ground surface that will absorb more stormwater runoff and reduce the heat radiating off of the play surface during hot days.

Stormwater is the rain or snow that falls on cities and towns and eventually washes into our storm drains. Along the way it picks up a host of toxic chemicals, bacteria, and contaminants like oil, grease, pet waste, litter and salt. These things mix with the water that then proceeds to flow through our drains, untreated, back into rivers and lakes.

“The hands-on depaving process and subsequent tree plantings capture the hearts and energies of our school community, working together to make our school yard healthier for both the environment and students. We are excited to demonstrate to others the power to make positive change when individuals act together,” said Christy Webster, Principal of Sheppard Public School.

Reep is honored to receive grant funding provided by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). This is just the beginning of Depave, OTF is funding 36 depave projects through to 2021 in 9 communities and this project at Sheppard Public School will encourage greener infrastructure in Waterloo Region and showcase the power of community mobilization for a greener future.

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[Reep Green Solutions](#) is an environmental charity based in the Waterloo Region committed to helping people live sustainably. Reep offers home energy, waste reduction, water conservation and healthy yards services. You may also contact Donnique Williams, communications@reepgreen.ca, 519-744-6583 ext. 222, for additional comments.