

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of pink flowers with bright orange centers. A bee is visible on one of the flowers, and another flower is in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

THE RIVERWOOD CONSERVANCY'S

# *Samara*

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 1

# Spotted at Riverwood



1: A family builds a birdhouse with Pat Kelly; Snowdrops are in bloom outside Chappell House; and one student had a blast learning about skulls with Mark Mitro over March Break.

2: A volunteer meets the Ball Python during a March Break Party Safari; UTM students take part in a LEADS program; and a beautiful sunset is spotted outside the Ravine Room at Chappell House.

3: Andrew and Dylan remove Phragmites in the MacEwan Pond; A toad comes for a visit to the Chappell House greenhouse; and Ed Davies bags groceries at the Whole Foods Community Giving Day.

Cover: A bumblebee enjoys the Coneflowers





A sunflower in bloom at Riverwood

# 2017 BY THE NUMBERS

BY: DOUGLAS MARKOFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2017 was an extraordinary year for The Riverwood Conservancy. The diverse contributions of over 3,500 Friends of Riverwood led to palpable, measurable impacts on the community. Collectively, your contributions extended well beyond the following highlights:

1

- Indigenous Day celebrated with the Mississaugas of the Credit River First Nations, Six Nations, Wasauksing First Nation and Métis
- Volunteer Stewardship Leader Training program developed
- Stewardship Management Plan written
- Enabling Garden Sensory Trail designed and installed for people with visual challenges
- Peer-reviewed article on vernal ponds published in Wetland Science and Practice, a step towards restoring MacEwan Pond
- New classroom opened and already fully booked
- Large swath of ground-nesting bee habitat protected
- Modern-day production of Shakespeare's Othello performed by Driftwood Theatre, a collaboration with Visual Arts Mississauga

2

- Wild bird food preference studies conducted
- New directors joined the Board
- New part-time staff joined the TRC team

3

Events held in partnership with University of Toronto Mississauga

4

Garden renovations completed

5

High efficiency natural gas furnaces installed in Chappell House, replacing 5 oil furnaces

35

Special needs kids participated in 4-week Camp Riverwood

39

Seniors enjoyed tea in the MacEwan Barn

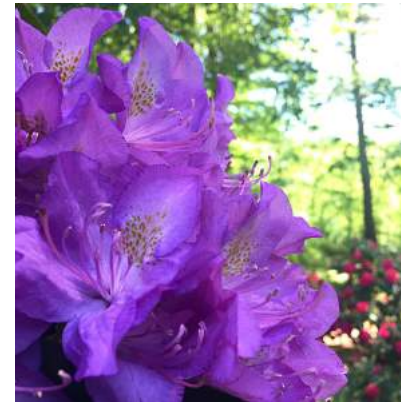
50

Corporate groups contributed sweat equity to improve the Riverwood ecosystem

Guests learned about planned giving and living legacy in our Knowledge Cafes

75

Rhododendron grown and thriving



96

High school students performed their community service hours at Riverwood

250

People attended the Riverwood Garden Soirée  
Members supported TRC

550



Education and Stewardship programs delivered

Kids and parents enjoyed March Break programs for kids and Hot Chocolate and Wild Birds

1,100

People with special needs connected to nature in the Enabling Garden

1,430

Volunteers contributed

26,233

hours to support programs, valued at:

\$630,000

2,500

Pounds of bird seed were donated and distributed

3,000

Native trees, shrubs and perennials including pollinator plants were planted by volunteers

Guests braved the heat to witness the solar eclipse

8,000

Pounds of invasive Garlic Mustard were removed

3,600

Square metres were cleared of Buckthorn and Honeysuckle

Students gained understanding and appreciation of our shared environment; including 5,800 elementary students in Education Naturally, 1,900 secondary students in LEADS and 1,300 Enabling Garden participants

9,000



10,000

Guests enjoyed birding, astronomy, nature talks and heart-healthy walks

35,000

People visited our website

# GROWTH

BY KEVIN SHERWIN, CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Spring is in the air and all of us are anticipating the growth that will be taking place at Riverwood and in our own gardens. It is truly an exciting and inspiring part of the year. Plants burst from the barren-looking soil, buds swell and open into beautiful, colourful flowers and the mighty trees spread their green canopy.

It wasn't so many years ago that I was first introduced to Riverwood by founder Charlie Brown. My experience at Riverwood can be capsulized by one word: growth. Growth has taken place because of donations of time and money by many supporters. This last year, the support has been fantastic.

In my short time, our budget has doubled by simply trying to meet the demand for our programs. And so, we have doubled our classroom space as well. We are already straining again with more teachers and students wanting to visit this magical place than our expanded capacity can handle. What we do, how we do it, and our wonderful teachers, are all filling a need to connect young people to nature and learn in an inspiring way.

We have returned many acres that were once choked with invasive plants to a healthy forest that supports our diverse wildlife. Through the diligent efforts of staff and so many volunteers, over 12 tonnes (wet weight) of garlic mustard alone has been removed over the last six years. That's the weight of more than two large bull elephants!

Our free Discovery@Riverwood education programs are as popular as ever, and some of the exciting paid programs we tested last year are proving to be successful. Thanks to wonderful relationships with partners such as The Royal Astronomical Society of Mississauga, Earthshine Astronomy and the University of Toronto Mississauga, we are expanding our horizons and supporting the environment with new and fun ways of learning.

Even more exciting are the stories we hear. The stories people tell us about what Riverwood means to them, or how volunteering with The Riverwood Conservancy has changed their lives. Stories about how the peace of the property and beauty of the gardens have helped them cope with the pressures of life - these stories are what bring me the most satisfaction. I know that the plans for the future will result in even more stories from more people, while still ensuring the integrity and conservation of this treasure of a place.

Thank you to my fellow volunteers, our dedicated staff and all of us who help make this growth possible. Building on our efforts last year, this coming year promises to be even better. With strong support from the City of Mississauga, our sponsors and donors, and our other partners, one already sees a wonderful year unfolding and you continue to play a pivotal role.



A sprout pops up from the ground - a sign of spring

# CONNECTING TO ONE ANOTHER THROUGH NATURE

BY: DEREK STONE, CONSERVATION SPECIALIST

In my time as the Conservation Specialist at The Riverwood Conservancy, I can honestly say I've learned something new every day, from both people and nature. Whether we're out picking invasive garlic mustard (over 8,000 pounds in 2017), or planting an assortment of 3,000 native plants in the ground, being out in nature provides opportunities to learn and connect with others.

Last year, I met a young boy from Taiwan, Jin, who was shy and spoke very little English but wanted to help with our stewardship projects.

During his time here at Riverwood, Jin was excited to plant his first tree and was amazed when he saw his first herd of deer. As we worked together, we started to overcome some of our communication barriers, his expressions often saying more than words could.

Soon after, he held his first caterpillar, giving into fits of laughter as it crawled along his arm, and up his sleeve. We laughed together until he finally managed to put it back on the tree, and collapsed onto the dirt with a smile that stretched from ear to ear.



Phragmites is removed from the MacEwan Pond | Photo by Derek Stone

At the end of the day, as Jin's bus pulled up, he turned back and ran over to me. "I am with you." He said, before running back to the bus again.

Nature connects us all. It is an immutable language that simply requires we listen. Nature helps us grow together, then nurtures that growth by inspiring curiosity, wonder, and the search for answers.

This year, I invite you to come out to Riverwood to connect with nature, ask your questions, and hopefully, find your answers.

A promotional graphic for the Mississauga Marathon. It features a silhouette of a runner in motion against a warm, golden background. The text is prominently displayed in red and black. The event is scheduled for May 5 & 6, 2018. The Mississauga Marathon logo is in the bottom right corner.

**RUN/WALK  
FOR RIVERWOOD**  
In the Mississauga Marathon

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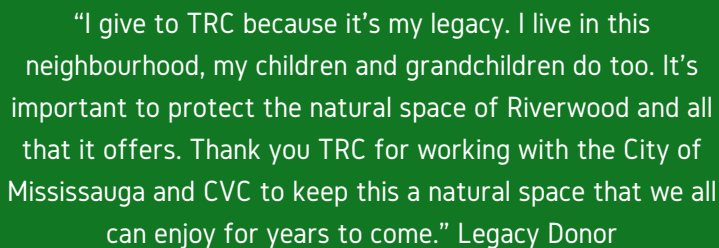
**May 5 & 6, 2018**



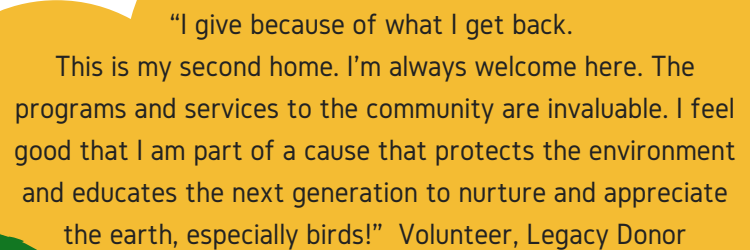
# WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE TO THE RIVERWOOD CONSERVANCY?

BY: LORRAINE CROW, MANAGER, PHILANTHROPY

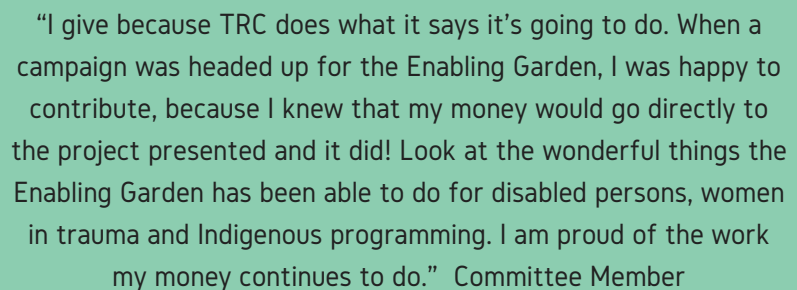
Part of my job, and my pleasure, is to meet with donors and tell them about all the programs we have at TRC, ask them what we can do better and ask them the most important question: “Why do you give to The Riverwood Conservancy?” The answers are enlightening, genuine and passionate;



“I give to TRC because it’s my legacy. I live in this neighbourhood, my children and grandchildren do too. It’s important to protect the natural space of Riverwood and all that it offers. Thank you TRC for working with the City of Mississauga and CVC to keep this a natural space that we all can enjoy for years to come.” Legacy Donor



“I give because of what I get back. This is my second home. I’m always welcome here. The programs and services to the community are invaluable. I feel good that I am part of a cause that protects the environment and educates the next generation to nurture and appreciate the earth, especially birds!” Volunteer, Legacy Donor



“I give because TRC does what it says it’s going to do. When a campaign was headed up for the Enabling Garden, I was happy to contribute, because I knew that my money would go directly to the project presented and it did! Look at the wonderful things the Enabling Garden has been able to do for disabled persons, women in trauma and Indigenous programming. I am proud of the work my money continues to do.” Committee Member

The 2017 Knowledge Café series of TRC helped the community understand aspects of investing, charitable giving tax advantages, insurance policy donations, endowments, share certificate transfers, the importance of having a will and many other aspects of financial health and retirement.

The Knowledge Café 2018 series will expand on this information. Visit our website for topics regarding green funeral options, estate planning and executor duties, giving plans that are right for you and much more.

For more information or to book an appointment to talk about why you give to TRC, please contact Lorraine Crow, Manager, Philanthropy: [Lorraine.Crow@TheRiverwoodConservancy.org](mailto:Lorraine.Crow@TheRiverwoodConservancy.org)



# A SPECIAL YEAR FOR RIVERWOOD

BY: SHIRLEY DANIELS, SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR

2017 was a very exciting year for the Special Events Committee as it was Canada's 150th Birthday!

In April, The Riverwood Conservancy recognized one of our patrons, Fred Ketchen, for his wonderful support and participation in promoting the Gardens and Educational programs at Riverwood over the years.

The Annual General Meeting, also in April, featured a presentation by the City of Mississauga about the C150 grant and the public artwork, "Pine Sanctuary."

Once again, we undertook the implementation of the Silent Auction for the Riverwood Garden Soirée under the stars, the major fundraiser, which we staged in the MacEwan Barn. We were delighted with the results and thank you all for your generous donations and purchases.

The Board of Directors and the staff hosted the Annual Patio Party for members and the Friends of Riverwood and they also welcomed our many sponsors to a Fall Thank You Party in October. Both of these events were very well received and enjoyed by all.

Since this was a year of celebration, it was decided to host two afternoon Tea Parties for Seniors to showcase our Enabling Garden, one in September and the other in December. In each case, seniors enjoyed delicious sandwiches, small mouthwatering pastries and cake, along with tea or coffee, served by our committee.

Jane New and her team showed the groups how to plant herbs and bulbs, which each did, so that they could take it home. Many seniors wore hats which were beautifully decorated and prizes were given for the best Bonnet.

As Chair of Special Events, I cannot thank the members of this committee enough for all their hard work and dedication to ensure all our events have a successful outcome. A very special thank you to Robin Haley-Gillin for her amazing administrative skills. Our sincere thanks, too, to the Board of Directors, volunteers, Douglas Markoff, our Executive Director and his exceptional staff for all their time, support and help. We could not have done it without you!



Crafts are enjoyed at the Seniors Tea



Pine Sanctuary is unveiled



The Riverwood Garden Soirée is a magical evening

# THE SECRET TO THE SUCCESS OF DISCOVERY@RIVERWOOD

BY: DAVE TAYLOR, EDUCATION CONSULTANT

They are the unsung backbone of TRC's free public programs; Discovery@Riverwood (D@R). If you have ever attended one of these events, and over 6,000 guests do each year, then you have seen them. They are D@R volunteers. For the most part they work in the background. They set up chairs for talks, follow at the back of the line for hikes to ensure no one gets lost or left behind and support our presenters as best they can.

Without this dedicated band of volunteers we could not offer the number of programs we do; almost two per week. They are the folks that meet you at the door or by the pergola. They are the ones who introduce the speaker or hike leader. They are the ones that take your registration, direct you to the washrooms and generally make your visit to Riverwood enjoyable.

Discovery@Riverwood began in its present form in 2009 and some of these volunteers have been with the program since then. New volunteers are added each year as others move on. In age they range from teenagers to seniors and their good humour and knowledge are the basis for the quality of the programs. This year they were called upon to address a literally overwhelming response to the solar eclipse which saw an expected crowd of 1,000 grow to four times that number. Under great pressure they organized the hordes of people into something resembling order and as a result the vast majority enjoyed the experience.

At the other end of the spectrum volunteers have supported many events where there were less than 20 people in attendance. This is closer to the numbers we expect at many of our talks and walks and it is here that the public gets to interact with them on a more interactive manner.

As a frequent presenter myself I enjoy the banter and the back and forth that volunteers bring to an evening. I have heard from other speakers how much they appreciate their support. So the next time you attend one of our D@R events take note of these volunteers. There wouldn't be a program without their help!



Wow! D@R Volunteers are awesome!

Check out our online calendar  
for all our  
Discovery@Riverwood events

# GARDENING AT RIVERWOOD: A HISTORY

BY: KATHY LYTLE & JANICE ECKLAND



A Red Hot Poker in bloom at Riverwood:  
thanks to the hard work of gardeners!

Gardening at Riverwood has deep roots. It started many years ago with a few stalwarts who formed the Mississauga Garden Council (now The Riverwood Conservancy, TRC). Their goal was to develop beautiful gardens on the newly acquired city property. The first attempt, with plans by Don Hancock, donations from Sheridan Nurseries, and much back-breaking work from Charlie Brown and his merry band of gardeners, was devoured by deer. Discouraged, but not defeated, the group relocated to plant around Chappell House, creating the Sundial Garden and restoring the Pond, the Rose Garden and the Courtyard Gardens.

By 2006, Philip Stuart (gone but never forgotten) was alone, toiling away in the gardens. Along came three eager women with trowels and secateurs in hand. Mentored by Philip, progress was made. Fast forward a few years, and the three gardeners decided it was time to split up and come on different days because volunteers began stepping forward but needed guidance. And so began the programme of lead gardeners with a team.

And now here we are in 2018 with six lead gardeners and over 35 volunteers, but ready to welcome more. On March 28, we had the annual volunteer sign-up for all returning and new gardeners. The beauty of being a gardening volunteer is that you don't need to know anything about gardening. All you need is a willingness to spend a couple of hours in the gardens getting your hands dirty!



# MOVING TOWARDS TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AT THE RIVERWOOD CONSERVANCY

BY: CATHERINE WASSMANSDORF, LEADS INSTRUCTOR

In 2015, Truth and Reconciliation concluded over seven years of work focused on First Nations, Indigenous, Métis and Inuit peoples experience in Indian Residential Schools in Canada.

In 2016, Jane New began the work of reconciliation at Riverwood with Cat Criger, Indigenous Elder at UTM with the support of Melissa Berger, to develop and pilot the 12 week Indigenous Spirit Journey Program for Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) youth at risk. This program held indigenous teachings and ways of knowing at the centre of student learning and experience.

This past fall, The Riverwood Conservancy and CVC Education staff were invited by the Peel District School Board and Credit River Métis Council (CRMC) to grow this important work. Together, a unique program was developed and piloted for two classes of grade 11 environmental science students. The program, named Nature's Truth by retired CRMC Senator Bill Morrison, focused on Métis and scientific ways of knowing about water.

Kyle Morrison from CRMC accompanied students throughout a three-day journey. Students began at the headwaters of the Credit River at Peel Field Centres' G.W. Finlayson Centre where students learned how to be present in the natural world and about human activities that are affecting the headwaters, by using observation and water testing. Students then visited Riverwood where Jane New and Catherine Wassmansdorf taught them about connections between plants like cattails and clean water, conducted physical and chemical water testing in the Credit, and examined the river's benthic populations. The classes then travelled to Rattray Marsh for a day with CVC's Renée Brock to see where the river ends before flowing into Lake Ontario, to learn about sweet water, and do a final set of chemical water tests. Students were guided in ways of connecting and respectfully interacting with nature, how to see human impact from Métis and scientific perspectives, the relationship of plants to the Credit River, and finally how to protect this vital resource for our shared future.



Students out on trail during Nature's Truth, a program supported by the Pendle Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga

This incredible partnership has created a unique education program centred on Métis ways of knowing and grounded in curriculum. It builds relationship between the Métis community and over 100 students who will participate in Nature's Truth by the end of the school year.

"Having that wonderful blend of western science and Métis perspective helps us see the different waterways, and the nature around them in a different way. It has been a really rich experience. As a teacher remarked, "I am really excited! Moving forward, how can we look at environmental science from many different perspectives? It has been wonderful."

And from students: "Here we are looking at the bigger picture... How organisms really interact, and [that] you only take what is given to you."

One student discovered their own Métis heritage during the program and felt it was helpful "to learn about myself and some history I have with Métis."

This spring, three more schools will have the opportunity to experience this pilot program.

The Riverwood Conservancy would like to thank the Pendle Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga for supporting this innovative new Nature's Truth Program.

# THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT LIVES ON

BY: KAREN TULL, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The spirit of volunteerism continues to reign strongly over The Riverwood Conservancy (TRC). Volunteers continue to demonstrate a vested interest in TRC. The year 2017 was a bountiful year for TRC as 1,430 volunteers contributed over 26,000 hours of their valuable time to the organization.

The “life blood” of our organization’s survival, our vibrant and committed cohort of volunteers, is comprised of Program Assistants, Office Assistants, Gardeners and the Board of Directors and more. Undoubtedly, without our volunteers, there would be very little to celebrate!

Volunteers were especially important in 2017 as we celebrated Canada 150 at Riverwood. The team gave over 675 hours of their time at 30 celebration events. This was above and beyond the regularly scheduled volunteer activities. We could not have celebrated Canada’s birthday without our wonderful volunteer team!

Such success stories could not be had without the amazing TRC staff. Our united staff must not go unnoticed. Indeed, the love for TRC is demonstrated in their impeccable service and they must be commended. Let us not forget that they at times fall into the volunteer category too!

We are positive that 2018 will definitely be another bountiful year.

Keep an eye on our website for new volunteer opportunities throughout the year!



Volunteers, from young to young at heart, enjoy the 2017 BBQ

# 2017 DONORS

## INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Anonymous (5)	Margy de Gruchy	Merle Jones	Nikita Nair	Lillian Smith
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 Shirley Daniels  
 Stephanie Grant  
 Robin Haley-Gillin  
 Stephen & Krystina Holinski  
 Dave Irwin  
 Marc Johnson  
 Patrick Kelly  
 Naguib Kerba  
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 Laura Kingsbury  
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 Carolyn Sherk  
 Carol Sherwin  
 Kevin Sherwin  
 Dave Taylor  
 Paul Taylor  
 Tod Waring

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Luke Gillin  
 Howard Hall



# 2017 DONORS (CONTINUED)

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Armstrong Milling Co. Ltd.  
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Autotex Service Centre Ltd  
Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association  
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## ORGANIZATIONS IN-KIND

Aeilli Restaurant  
Applewood Village Dentistry  
Apricot Tree  
Armstrong Milling Co. Ltd.  
Art Gallery of Ontario  
Bella Storm Design  
Brown's Social House  
Capra's Kitchen  
Car Pride Auto Spa  
Carrick Creations  
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Pavao Automotive  
Piatto  
Pottery Extravaganza  
Reunion Island Coffee

Ripley's Aquarium  
Salon Loco Motion Ltd  
Saucy  
Scotts Canada  
Shaw Festival  
Sheridan Nurseries  
Snug Harbour  
Soulpepper  
Springbank Greenhouses  
Starbucks  
Starwood Hotels  
Stihl Limited  
Stratford Festival  
Summit Garden Chinese Cuisine  
Suncor Energy  
The Erin Mills Pump & Patio  
The Keg  
The New Classical FM  
The Perennial Gardner  
Union Social Eatery  
Via Rail  
Vineland Nurseries  
White House Meats  
Whole Food Market - Square One  
Wild Birds Unlimited



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Carolyn Sherk (Member-at-Large), Heather Shaw (Member-at-Large), Charles Brown, Stephanie Grant,  
Shirley Daniels, Naguib Kerba, Paul Taylor, Marc Johnson, Clement Mbulu, Nicole Skeete-Williams,  
Christina Woodward and Alan Lytle.

SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Ron Starr

CITY OF MISSISSAUGA LIAISON: Hazel McColl, Community Development Coordinator

TRC STAFF: Douglas Markoff, Executive Director; Brian Packham, Office Manager; Robin Haley-Gillin, Manager of Organizational  
Development and Volunteers; Vivian Peets, Marketing Coordinator; Erin Farrow, Education Naturally Teacher; Catherine  
Wassmansdorf, L.E.A.D.S. Instructor; Jane New, Enabling Garden Coordinator; Lorraine Crow, Manager, Philanthropy; Jane De  
Cheverry, Comptroller; Derek Stone, Conservation Specialist; Beth Jones, Grant Research & Writing Specialist, Pamela Kiez,  
Special Events Coordinator; Joelle Berube-Cheng, Development Coordinator; Karen Tull, Volunteer Coordinator.

CONSULTANT: Dave Taylor, Education Program Director/ Consultant

In memory of the late Martin Robinson, former Volunteer, Treasurer & Chair of the Board

