

# KITCHISSIPPI TIMES

**Green team: Maker House, Ecology Ottawa partner on urban forest program**

04 September 2019



Ecology Ottawa has a goal of planting tens of thousands of trees in Ottawa. Photo courtesy Champlain Oaks Community Association

An Ottawa organization dedicated to protecting the environment has teamed up with a Hintonburg merchant to cultivate “urban forests” in an effort to fight climate change and ensure people have access to healthy local food.

Ecology Ottawa has a bold goal of planting tens of thousands of trees in the next few years, and the group is now one step closer to making that happen thanks to its recent three-month partnership with Maker House, a Kitchissippi furniture business.

The store opened at 987 Wellington St. four years ago and immediately started a program called craft change, under which Maker House donates two per cent of its earnings to community organizations each quarter.

“The craft change program has really been a part of our DNA since the beginning,” says Gareth Davies, owner of the Hintonburg shop that sells handcrafted furniture. “We wanted to give back because we wanted to make sure that there is a clear, community benefit to what we are doing.” Davies says the store has donated more than \$60,000 to 15 local charities and organizations since the fall of 2015, with another \$10,000 expected to be donated in the next four months. The local business owner says he tries to partner with Ottawa-based groups that share similar values and beliefs as he does, making Ecology Ottawa a great fit.

“We are in a climate crisis right now around the world, and we are seeing a crazy fluctuation of extreme heat and extreme, extreme cold, as well as forest fires and droughts,” says Davies. “Ecology ensures that people are educated when it comes to the environment, while growing their roster of volunteers, educating people on how to get involved with city hall and planting trees.” Between April and June of this year, Maker House raised more than \$4,200 for the grassroots not-

for-profit organization. That money will go towards purchasing 1,000 fruit- and nut-bearing trees, as well as the creation of a new urban food forests workshop for youth.

Ecology Ottawa has given away almost a million trees to be planted around the city, including 10,000 already this year. The organization set a goal of providing 12,000 trees this year, a target it expects to reach sometime this fall.

The group decided to launch the new urban food forests program after discovering residents are becoming more interested in growing plants they can actually eat, says Robb Barnes, the executive director of Ecology Ottawa. He says the workshop will encourage people to do their part to make their community a little greener.

“I think there is a lot of interest in the city about food security and what that looks like,” says Barnes. “People want to learn more about how to do that in their own backyard, and they want to learn more about how to make this city resilient to climate impacts and foster food security.” The group has also partnered with the Parkdale Food Centre to identify what sorts of issues people want to address and make the new workshop come to fruition.

“They bring a level of expertise in terms of what the community needs are at the very grassroots, and what kind of food issues and food pressures they are seeing on the neighbourhood level,” Barnes explains.

While details are still being worked out, the youth workshop is slated to get under way this fall. It will focus on planting trees that produce food, as well as demonstrating community gardening techniques.

Barnes says Ecology Ottawa will be reaching out to local schools, community centres and universities looking for interested participants.

Source: <https://kitchissippi.com/2019/09/04/green-team-maker-house-ecology-ottawa-partner-on-urban-forest-program/>