



Annual Report 2008 – 2009

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Wintergreen Studios
9780 Canoe Lake Road
Township of South Frontenac, ON

17 September 2009

Dear Friends of Wintergreen,

It is with pleasure and pride that we present our first annual report. This report documents some of our most impressive achievements over the past year and highlights some of the work we intend to pursue over the years to come.

You will first read about our facilities. A year ago, we were stuffing bales of straw between the posts and beams as we constructed the lodge—a building that now accommodates up to 14 guests, and provides a welcoming setting for workshops and meetings for 20 participants or more. You will also learn about our varied activities, including workshops, retreats, meetings, and research projects.

As we evaluate our first year against the Business Plan that was passed at our first AGM, we do so in light of what has come to be known as the *triple bottom line*—not just the economic bottom line, but also, the social and environmental bottom lines. And we have most certainly exceeded our hopes and expectations in terms of the impact of our work in the social and environmental realms. Already, people's appreciation for the natural world and sustainable living practices have been positively altered by time spent at Wintergreen. We have heard stories of being inspired and energized as a result of taking part in workshops, stories of learning new skills, of developing new habits of mind. While our economic picture is less encouraging, we expect to be back on the predicted path by 2011, in part because of the increased emphasis on marketing and development described later in our report.

Although our Board holds the view that we, like other non-profit organizations, must confront the reality of difficult financial times, we remain certain of the viability of our mission: *Wintergreen enables people to develop artistic and domestic skills, engage in mindful living, and return to their homes and workplaces inspired and refreshed.*

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Rena Uptis'.

Rena Uptis, Chair of the Board

Facilities

The building permit for the lodge was issued on June 8, 2008. Scarcely six months later, we held a Grand Opening Celebration with over 120 well-wishers present at the lodge to help celebrate the launch of Wintergreen. Many of the well-wishers took an active part in lodge construction—family, friends, board members, students, and donors among them.



The lodge serves as a demonstration site for environmentally responsible living. Highlights include straw bale construction, living roofs, photovoltaic panels to collect energy from the sun, a peat-based bio-filtration system, organic gardens, and water saving and energy saving devices.

Various outbuildings feature other forms of sustainable building, such as cordwood construction, living roofs, and geothermal energy.



Our Activities

Wintergreen hosts three types of activities: (1) workshops and courses, (2) meetings and retreats, and (3) research on ecology and arts education. Here's what we've accomplished since the opening in December, 2008, in each of these three realms.

WORKSHOPS AND COURSES



We have hosted eighteen workshops in the creative and culinary arts (e.g., Hand-made books, Indian cooking, Digital Soundscapes, Assembling Textiles and Natural Objects) and sustainable building and mindful living (e.g., Cordwood Construction, Living Off the Grid). While the numbers of registrants have been

fewer than projected, the workshops have been extraordinarily well received by those who have attended them—some people have returned three or four times. Here's what they have to say:

This is the first time I have thought that I can build something myself. I've loved the emergent process, the sense of play.

Cordwood Building workshop participant



Just to let you all know how much I enjoyed meeting everyone and I can't believe how easily we all bonded. It really was a magical weekend.

Assembling Textiles and Natural Objects workshop participant

I never dreamed I could make anything like this! Thank you Kevin, thank you Wintergreen.

Fused Glass workshop participant



A feast for the senses ... the sounds, the textures, the colours, the smells, and the food. Simply glorious. I can't wait to return.

African Drumming workshop participant

As you know, I have been unwell this past year. This experience was one of many firsts for me. It's the first time I've ventured out to be with other people, especially strangers. And it's the first time in over a year that I've felt hungry at mealtime!

Needle Felting workshop participant



I can't describe how this experience has affected me. My days at Wintergreen have remained with me in ways that I never expected to be possible.

Assembling Textiles and Natural Objects workshop participant

MEETINGS AND RETREATS

We have held four meetings and retreats involving a broad cross section of people—artist-educators and administrators from The National Arts Centre and the Royal Conservatory, researchers from Queen's University and Concordia University, and lawyers, financial planners, representatives from Industry Canada along with business and loans officers from the Eastern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporations.

What can I say? Truly enjoyed your location. The lodge is quite amazing and I will be spreading the news about your work. Enjoyed your presentation as well. My husband and I are becoming quite interested in alternative energy sources, and solar and wind are on the "learning list." Also, your food was fabulous. I could have eaten the entire spinach salad!

Loans Officer, Valley Heartland CFDC



You have to see it to believe it.

CFDC Business Officer

Being here opened up my eyes to many ways that we, without thinking, use energy...and to many ways we can cut back on energy...being more aware of energy consumption. The straw bale lodge is incredible. It is so warm. There is also a very wonderful aesthetic effect with the plastered walls. The effects are so interesting, so textured.

LTTA artist-educator (dancer)



I feel like I've started to put things back in proper perspective. I'm inspired and motivated to live more simply, less wastefully, and less selfishly.

LTTA artist-educator (theatre arts)

This whole experience was a compilation of meeting people who are passionate about what they do, seeing and feeling what they do with that passion, and the whole whimsical fantasy that is thought to be frivolous in everyday life coming true here in a positive concrete way that is going to touch hundreds and thousands of people. Sunlight through glass in the Hobbit house, the woodstove in the morning...it was a panorama of little glistening jewels.

LTTA artist-educator (potter and visual artist)

RESEARCH ON ECOLOGY AND ARTS EDUCATION

Our research efforts have focused on two projects, both involving artist-educators from the Learning Through the Arts Active Ecology Program of the Royal Conservatory and funded in part by a SEED research grant from the Faculty of Education, Queen's University as well as a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Standard Research Grant.

The first of these projects examined the impact of a five-day professional development session held at Wintergreen in October 2008. The second research project was a two-month pilot project on energy conservation and the arts, which took place at a public elementary school in Toronto. The latter of these two projects incorporated the use of an electronic portfolio as a tool for archiving, editing, and critiquing student work and serves as a prototype for a three-year project, for which we are currently preparing a proposal to SSHRC for funding.

To date, the following papers and conference presentations have stemmed directly from activities held at Wintergreen.

Developing Ecological Habits of Mind the Support of Electronic Portfolios. Research paper by Rena Upitis, Ann Patteson, and Philip Abrami to be presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, April, 2010, Denver Colorado (pending acceptance).

Developing Ecological Habits of Mind Through the Arts (in press). Research paper by Rena Upitis to appear in the International Journal of Education Through the Arts.

Using Electronic Portfolios to Learn About Ecology Through the Arts. Research paper by Rena Upitis, Philip Abrami, and Ann Patteson, to be presented at the International Association for the Development of the Information Society WWW/Internet Conference in Rome, Italy, November 18-22, 2009.



Developing Ecological Habits of Mind for School-based Artists. Research paper by Rena Upitis, Wesley Ducey, and Holly Ogden, presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education Annual Conference, Ottawa, May 23-26, 2009.

Report to the Royal Conservatory on the Ecology and the Arts Institute for LTTA Artist-Educators by Rena Upitis, February, 2009.

Media Coverage and Presentations

Wintergreen has had several articles in local newspapers. We have also taken part in exhibits and offered presentations to business people and members of our local community. Here is a sample of our media coverage and outreach work:

Wintergreen was featured in an article on living roofs in the *Kingston Whig Standard*, July 24, 2009.

Making Eco-art at an Eco-lodge, by Julie Druker. *Feature Article in the Frontenac News*, July 16, 2009. http://www.frontenacnews.ca/2009/09-28_jul_16/eco_art.html

Wintergreen Studios Unveils Summer Programs by Craig Bakay. *Article in Frontenac EMC*, Thursday, June 4, 2009.

Building an Off-Grid Business. *Presentation hosted by the Frontenac Community Futures Development Corporation (FCFDC) in Verona, Ontario, April 29, 2009.*

Exhibition at GreenUp! <http://www.greenupfestival.ca>
Kingston's celebration of earth-friendly living, on April 19, 2009.

Education centre aims to bring balance back by Margaret Brand. *The Review-Mirror*, March 26, 2009.

New Eco-lodge Offers Nature and the Lost Arts by Julie Druker. *Frontenac News*, March 5, 2009.

Building an Off-Grid Retreat Centre. *Presentation to the Kingston Rotary Club*, March 3, 2009.



Wintergreen was featured in the cover story, Artful Living by Anita Jansman, in *Complete Health*, Fall, 2008.

Donations and Fundraising

Donors were generous in our first year of operations. Donations received to date total \$189,380. Another gift of \$30,000 has been pledged for 2009. Other highlights:

- ◆ Every dollar received from outside donors has been matched by the Wintergreen Board of Directors
- ◆ All donations have been applied directly to program costs, most notably, towards capital expenditures for building construction
- ◆ Donors represent an impressive array of the Wintergreen community: course participants, students, friends and family of Wintergreen staff, community members, and professionals involved in the legal and financial aspects of creating Wintergreen
- ◆ An Annual Giving Campaign is in the planning stages, with an anticipated launch in November 2009

Our Volunteers



At the heart of any charitable organization is the cadre of volunteers that keep the organization energized and viable. Wintergreen is no exception. In our first year, we were overwhelmed by the number of volunteers who

helped in the building of our straw bale lodge. We have also enjoyed the *pro bono* services of volunteers and firms in these ways:

- ◆ Kitchen staff with experience working in community and commercial kitchens volunteered to cook and serve at workshops
- ◆ Graphic design by a student intern who continued to refine our materials once the internship had ended
- ◆ Off-grid system maintenance by both student interns and employees who installed our solar-based renewable energy system
- ◆ Business consulting by a Toronto firm specializing in start-up operations
- ◆ Press releases through the Frontenac Community Futures Development Corporation
- ◆ Marketing strategy consulting and legal advice from business consultants and successful owner-operators of small businesses

The Future

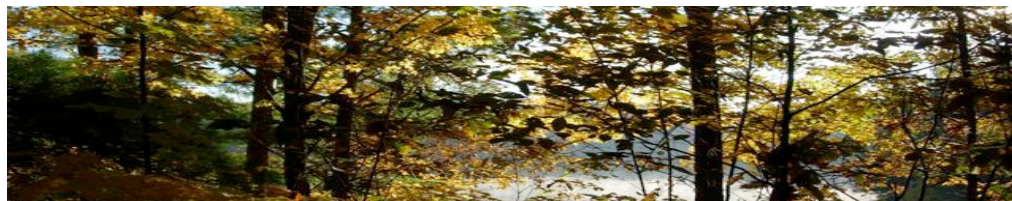
Now that we have completed a successful season of workshops, meetings and retreats, and launched two research projects, we are intensely involved in planning for the near and distant future. Our most popular course offerings will be repeated in the fall of 2009 and in 2010, and we will continue to experiment with different workshop formats throughout the next year. We are applying for operating and research grants to extend the work we have started, and we look forward to an expanded set of possibilities in all three of our realms in the coming years.

We are investigating new ways to partner with other organizations to expand internship possibilities at Wintergreen. These include the Corporate Social Responsibility program for Student Interns at the Queen's School of Business and an Industry Canada Internship program through the Community Futures Development Corporation.

Our newly established Marketing and Development Committee, a sub-committee of the Board of Directors, is planning a series of initiatives to help Wintergreen become more widely known. Marketing and communications are central to this effort. Strategies will include targeted advertising and mailings, revising our website for Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and more extensive media coverage. On the development side, our first Annual Giving campaign will be launched in November, 2009. Fundraising in general is a major focus for 2009–2010. One of our events will be an evening event to mark the Fall Equinox, to be held in Kingston on Saturday, September 25, 2010.

Our Donors (in alphabetical order)

Theresa Burke
Jennifer and Brian Davis
Ann Dunford
Sarah Gibson-Bray
Rita Irwin
Joan McDuff
Christine Mumford
Lynn Rainboth and Peter Shipton
Gary Rasberry
Alexander (Sandy) Sellers
Katharine Smithrim
Mary-Alice Thompson
Meagan and Michael Troop
Helen Turnbull
Rena Upitis
Valda D. Upitis
Zigfrids R. Upitis
Lynda Wilde



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