

# OUR VIRTUAL REALITY

## International Youth Day



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# INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

## Editor's note

On August 12th, we celebrate International Youth Day. As a teacher, I am always surrounded by the positive energy of the youth. And I must say, I love every bit! The kids and teens of today are so ambitious, woke, and dedicated that their energy is infectious.

We are lucky to be living in a city that offers many opportunities to children, including schools, libraries, playgrounds, parks etc. However, it is no secret that some parts of the cities are more well-endowed than others. I believe that every child, despite where they live, should have access to such resources.

As adults, we should try to make more opportunities available for our youth so they can have a better future. You can take small steps to do so! For example, donate children's literature to your closest library, push for the schools in your neighbourhood to have a free breakfast plan, get involved in the maintenance of local playgrounds or simply by engaging in intelligent, thought provoking conversation with kids.

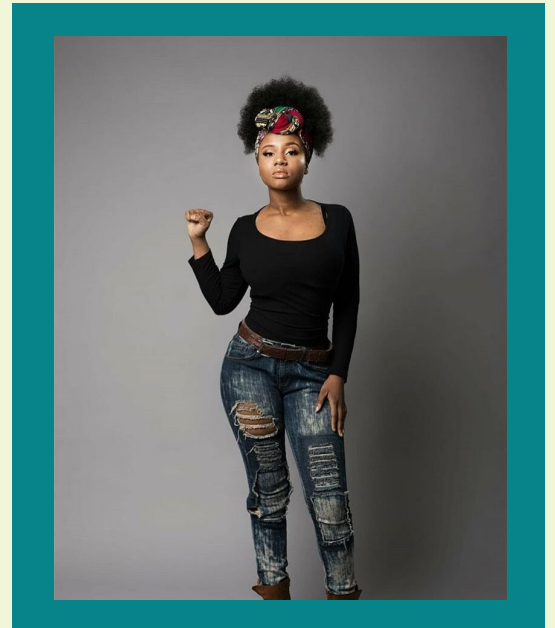
This week, we are featuring some prominent youth activists as well as some local programs that can benefit the youth. Start by exploring these causes and think about how you can get involved.

# Spotlight on: Youth in Activism

By Kate Stoehr

*Looking for leadership role models for your child or teen? Here are three inspiring young activists with incredible causes.*

From protecting the planet to tackling anti-black racism, youth and young adults are on the frontlines. Many activists, such as Nupol Kiazolu, began taking a stand at a very young age. Kiazolu held her first protest against anti-black racism at 13 and now, at 20 years old, she is the President of Black Lives Matter Greater New York, and a powerful voice in the Black Lives Matter movement. Kiazolu is also passionate about voting and democracy: she organized a voter registration drive at her high school and continues to grow the campaign, called Vote 2000, while attending Hampton University. Follow her on Instagram at @nupol\_justice or catch her interviews on YouTube.



16 year old Autumn Peltier is an Anishinaabe water advocate from Wikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island in what is currently Northern Ontario. Like Kiazolu, Peltier became a vocal activist at 13 when she addressed the United Nations General Assembly on World Water Day. Peltier advocates for clean drinking water for Indigenous communities on Turtle Island (North America) and communities across the globe. As the Chief Water Commissioner for the Anishinaabek Nation, Peltier highlights the sacredness of water for all and continues in her fight to make access to safe, clean water a basic human right. Follow Peltier on her Facebook page or on Instagram at @autumn.peltier

Youth are in leadership positions all over the world, much like the 15-year-old Leah Namugerwa, a young woman at the forefront of climate change activism in Uganda. Namugerwa raises awareness about the effects of climate change, such as drought and rising temperatures in her country by organizing school strikes and educating others through social media. She is also active in the fight against plastic pollution, spearheading a campaign against the use of plastic bags in Uganda. She is also the founder of Birthday Trees, an organization that provides trees for folks wishing to celebrate their birthdays by planting trees. Follow Namugerwa on Twitter at @NamugerwaLeah



# Youth Events and Programs in Toronto

By Haiyun Zhou

Youth engagement is an important endeavour for many organizations. Here are some programs and events that offer free drop-in, recreational activities and assistance to youth in the city of Toronto.



## YOUTH PET THERAPY

Caring for an animal can help reduce stress and anxiety for many people. The pet therapy sessions offer the opportunity to allow youth to pet, feed, groom, walk and hug animals. Click this [link](#) to learn more about registration dates.

## THE YMCA OF GREATER TORONTO

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity organization working on social issues in the Greater Toronto Area. There are various YMCA locations around Toronto. They focus on empowering young people and improving their health and well-being by offering numerous free programs for them. Click the [website](#) for more information



## AGO YOUTH PROGRAMS

AGO Youth programs serve youth aged 14-25 for free with the focus on building community, making art and creating safe and inclusive spaces for youth. The AGO offers courses and workshops for young artists (aged 2-18) and free drop-in programs for youth from of ages 14 to 25. Click the [link](#) for more details.



## BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a non-profit federation focusing on mentoring programs for youth. To empower youth and help them reach their potential, Big Brothers Big Sisters offers a range of mentoring programs to meet Canadian children's and families' needs. For more information, visit their [website](#)



# Carbon Footprint

By Samrawait Ghebresslassie

Carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions a person, place or thing produces throughout its lifetime. The greenhouse gases that are produced are mostly carbon dioxide but also include methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases. All of these gases trap heat in the atmosphere and have been the main cause of climate change. By trying to reduce your carbon footprint, you help save the environment and make the world a better place to live in!

The main factors that add to your carbon footprint are your transportation, your diet, what you buy, and the energy usage in your home.



## *Tips to reduce emissions from transportation*

- Drive less and take a bus or train instead
- Ride a bicycle
- Carpool
- Take more direct flights and less connecting flights

## *Tips to reduce emissions from your food*

- Eat less meat, especially red meat
- Buy local produce
- Be mindful of waste and only buy what you need
- Freeze food
- Compost
- Don't use disposable dishes and cutlery, but if you must, buy climate friendly compostable or biodegradable options

## *Tips to reduce emissions from shopping*

- Shop vintage
- Try to buy clothes that are fair trade and that you will wear often
- Consider the fabric the items are made of
- Donate old clothes
- Use a reusable bag in stores

## *Tips to reduce emissions from home*

- Turn off lights and appliances when not using them
- Turn off water taps when not using them
- Try to reuse items
- Donate appliances that work fine but you don't need anymore
- Recycle

If you want to calculate how much carbon footprint emissions you produce, you can use a carbon footprint calculator. Carbon footprint calculators are fun, short quizzes that you can take to find out an estimate of what your carbon footprint might be. It will also tell you what exact areas in your life you can improve on to reduce your carbon footprint emissions. Click [here](#) or [here](#) to take a quiz to calculate your carbon footprint.

# Hazardous Waste

By Samrawait Ghebresslassie

There are many items in our households that contain hazardous waste. Sometimes, we can be unsure how to properly and safely dispose of them. The improper disposal of household hazardous waste items has severe negative effects on the environment and can be very harmful to humans and animals. It is very important that they are not thrown in the garbage or the blue bin, and should not be poured down the drain, toilet or sewer but instead should be disposed of at drop off depots. The City of Toronto also collects electronic waste for proper disposal so that they are kept out of landfills. Here is a list of household hazardous waste and electronic waste items.

## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS ITEMS

### Personal Care Products

Alcohol-based lotions (aftershave, perfume, etc.)  
Medication and vitamins  
Nail polish and remover  
Syringes and medical sharps (must be put in a puncture-resistant sealed container)  
Non-empty aerosol cans

### Paints, Solvents, Glue

Spray paint  
Latex, oil and water-based paint  
Paint strippers  
Primers  
Rust removers  
Stains  
Thinners  
Turpentine  
Wood preservatives  
Glue

### Household Cleaning Products

Ammonia-based cleaners  
Abrasive powders  
Bleach  
Drain cleaners  
Floor and furniture polish  
Metal and oven cleaner  
Disinfectants  
Glass and mirror cleaner

### Other

Air freshener  
Batteries (all types)  
Compact florescent lamps (CFLs)  
Cooking oil  
Fluorescent tubes  
Swimming pool chemicals  
Mercury thermometers  
Lighter fluid

## ITEMS ACCEPTED AS ELECTRONIC WASTE



Cell phones, home phones  
Computer cables  
Laptop computers and accessories  
VCR/DVD players  
Video recorders  
TVs  
Desktop computers, monitors  
Printers, fax machines  
Cameras  
Speakers, stereos  
Tuners, turntables



- Empty metal paint cans with the lids removed can go into the recycling bin
- Remote controls, smoke detectors/alarms with the batteries removed can be disposed into the garbage
- VHS tapes, CDs, DVDs and cassettes should be disposed into the garbage
- REMEMBER: If you are unsure of where to throw something out just ask Waste Wizard. Click [here](#) and type in the item and click 'Ask the Wizard'. It will tell you where the item goes in
- All hazardous waste items have a symbol on them that indicate that they are hazardous. It varies between items but the four most common are corrosive, flammable, explosive, and poisonous.

# Greener than Ever: Environmentally Friendly Tips for Back to School

By Mary Hoang



As September approaches, head back to school with some environmentally friendly tips to start the school year greener and in a more eco-friendly way.

Make a little less trash by packing your lunches and snacks in reusable containers. This will reduce the amount of trash in our landfills. It is also important to remember the three R's: 'reduce', 'reuse', and 'recycle'. For example, use both sides of a sheet of paper and recycle it once you're done with it. Also, before buying new supplies, think of ways on how you can reuse your old things for school projects. For example, you can reuse a milk carton to create a bird feeder. Another friendly tip is picking a greener commute to school. If you live close to school, why not arrange a "walking pool" where parents or guardians chaperone a group of kids on foot or bike to school? If you live far away, you can set up a neighborhood carpooling system once it is safe to do so.

There are so many ways to be environmentally friendly in this upcoming school year. Can you think of other ways to be part of a greener school year? Take part in these simple tips and make a difference.