

Pollinator Garden by Club of Westfort (Thunder Bay) with support from K-Kids, Kiwanis Foundation of Canada and Eco Superior

The Kiwanis Club of Westfort (Thunder Bay) lost a committed volunteer when Scott Harris (photo in the newsletter) passed away in January 2024. Scott exemplified the Kiwanis Vision of improving the World One Child and One Community at a time. As an educator Scott created safe places for children to learn and thrive. As an environmental activist he was committed to working towards to a sustainable tomorrow for future generations. As a Kiwanian he was a tireless volunteer supporting children's projects. A collaborative community partnership that combined Scott's passions was an excellent fit for the Environmental Grant.

The Kiwanis Club of Westfort and Ogden Community School K-Kids Club are joining forces with a not-for-profit environmental organization (Eco-Superior). Funds from a Kiwanis Foundation of Canada Environmental Grant are supporting the creation of a pollinator garden on the grounds of Ogden Community School in Thunder Bay which will have a positive impact on the environment.

A sustainable pollinator garden is being developed that will provides food and habitat for bees, butterflies, birds, and other pollinating insects. The Ogden K-Kid members and advisors from the sponsoring Kiwanis Club are playing a critical role in building the pollinator gardens and conserving pollinator populations.

By taking action to create and maintain these vital habitats, young people can contribute to environmental education, promote biodiversity, support food security, foster community engagement, and develop valuable skills for personal and collective empowerment.

The plight of pollinators has garnered increasing attention worldwide. Bees, butterflies, birds, and other pollinating insects play a vital role in our ecosystem, facilitating the reproduction of flowering plants and ensuring the production of many fruits, vegetables, and nuts that we rely on for food. However, many pollinator species are facing unprecedented challenges, including habitat loss, pesticide exposure, climate change, and disease. As stewards of the future, youth have a unique opportunity to make a difference by building pollinator gardens in their communities.

One of the most compelling reasons for youth to build pollinator gardens is the opportunity for environmental education and awareness. Engaging in the process of planning, planting, and maintaining a garden provides hands-on learning experiences that foster a deeper understanding of ecosystems, biodiversity, and the interconnectedness of all living things. By witnessing firsthand the importance of pollinators and the threats they face, young people can become advocates for conservation and environmental stewardship.

Building a pollinator garden offers numerous opportunities for personal growth and leadership development. Youth involved in garden projects learn valuable skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and project management. They also gain confidence in their ability to effect positive change and make a difference in the world around them. These

experiences can have a lasting impact, shaping young people into informed, engaged, and empowered leaders for environmental sustainability.

The Ogden Community School K-Kids club got down to work on October 29, 2024. A cardboard outline of the garden was laid down and soaked. This spring a mix of foliage that will be appealing to pollinators will be planted. There is still much prework to do selecting the plants and planting the garden. The excitement was palpable when the cardboard outline was put in place and soaked.

On behalf of all the project's participants and partners – thanks and appreciation is extended to the Kiwanis Foundation of Canada.