



The Daily Gleaner

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Raising a Green Guru

Many in our community are trying to make large and small changes to lower our environmental impact on this earth. But let's face it – our children and grandchildren are the ones who will be left with either a hospitable or inhospitable climate due to our actions or inactions. And in fact, they are the ones who will be forced to be the real green gurus, as they will have to find innovative solutions to the climate crisis and the resulting state of the world in which they live.

I believe that our duty as adults and parents today is to ensure that our children are better stewards of the environment than we are. The only way to do that is to lead by example, give them opportunities to learn, challenge their thinking, and to make sure that their decision-making and life skills include 'environment' as one of the top criteria. There are studies indicating that our children won't have as much attachment to the environment and the 'great outdoors' as we do because of the pervasiveness of video games and related indoor activities that consume their time and creativity versus spending time at outdoor play. But this doesn't have to be so – as informed parents we have a chance to change this for our children.

In March there are several events happening in Fredericton that may help you in your quest to raise a green guru. First, The City of Fredericton, TD Mutual Funds and Brian Jones of TD Waterhouse, are sponsoring a Green Matters Student Essay Contest with \$2,000 in prize money! The topic of the essay contest is: **WHY DOES GREEN MATTER?** As explained on the www.greenmattersfredericton.com website - we want to know why you think it is important to make changes now that will help our environment and slow down climate change. What would you do? What changes have you already made? Do you walk and bike instead of drive? Do you pack a litter-less lunch? Do you wear your clothes many days in a row to save the water and energy from washing and drying them?! Tell us all the normal, weird and wild stuff you do to help the environment, and to make sure your parents change too! Tell us a story, and make it personal; it can be fictional or true (and it can be in either official language).

There are four categories: elementary (grades K-2/ grades 3-5), middle school, and high school. Eligible students must be attending Fredericton area schools in Districts 1 and 18 (refer to the full school list on the Green Matters website).

And the prizes are great! Winning essays will be posted on the Green Matters website, and the winner in each category will receive a cash prize and certificate. The deadline is coming up soon - 4:30 p.m. on Monday, March 10. Were you looking for an educational component to your children's March break? This could be it! Check out the website for all submission details and get your kids writing and learning about the environment at the same time!

The other event this month is presented by the vibrant parent resource organization fredkid.com (managed by Healthy Families, Healthy Communities Association). The event is called 'Becoming a Green Guru –

Eco-tips for Parents and Kids'. It is the 4th session in the Family Learning Series and is sponsored by the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund. It will be held at the Charlotte Street Arts Centre on March 11th from 7:30-9:00pm. The first 50 families will receive a Fred-Family Eco-Package valued at over \$50. Speakers will talk about climate change and how to 'green' your family, and there will be informational booths, refreshments and time to meet other aspiring green families. Call fredkid at 454-3310 for more information or visit www.fredkid.com

It is hard to believe when you look outside, but spring is coming – the season of re-birth in the natural world. Re-birth can happen in your home too – make spring the dawning of a new environmental consciousness in your family and, believe me, once you get your kids involved you won't have a choice! Environmental stewards come in all sizes and sometimes the smallest ones speak the loudest.

Sonya Hull is project manager for the City of Fredericton's Green Matters greenhouse gas reduction campaign which aims to reduce community generated GHG emissions by 6 percent by 2010. Want to help? Find out how at www.greenmattersfredericton.com