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Working together against Climate Change

John Lennon once wrote “Imagine all the people, Living life in peace...You may say I'm a dreamer, But I'm not the only one, I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will be as one”.

“Imagine” is one of my favourite songs, but I have to take issue with it. We can't just imagine change; we have to work towards change.

An eight year old hockey player imagines playing in the NHL some day, a teenage rock band imagines playing Madison Square Gardens one day, and I imagine a day when we don't have to worry about climate change or other environmental issues. But none of these dreams come true without hard work.

In a perfect world, we wouldn't need ‘environmentalists’ because humans would not have damaged our earth. But we have, and it needs fixing – fast. We have not messed up the planet with malicious intent, but the more we know about the effects of pollution on our planet and our health, the more we are motivated to do something about it.

The motivation to do something about climate change has come in large part over the last couple of years thanks to Al Gore, with his book and movie ‘An Inconvenient Truth’. His initiatives resulted in the Nobel Peace Prize and two Academy Awards last year – not bad!

As many of you know, two Fredericton residents, Carl Duivenvoorden and I, were two of 21 Canadians that had the opportunity to personally train with Al Gore in Tennessee last year to present the slide show featured in “An Inconvenient Truth’ live. This non-profit initiative is called The Climate Project.

We both signed up to do a minimum of 10 presentations as volunteers during the last year. At last count, our combined total is 175 presentations for over 27,000 people around Atlantic Canada and beyond. Neither one of us saw that coming! But we see our collective hard work paying off as environmental interest and positive action continues to grow exponentially in our part of the country and across the globe.

We have been pleasantly overwhelmed by the amount of interest and desire of people in all walks of life to learn about the climate crisis. But more importantly, we are meeting thousands of people who want to take action and do something about it. This endeavour has been hard work, and there is much more to do – the good news is – we are getting more help!

Al Gore is coming to Montreal in early April to train 200 more Canadians, including another 15 people from the Maritimes. He recently stated: "Canada is a crucial player on the world stage. It's also clear that Canadians want to solve the global climate crisis, and I'm eager to help in any way I can."

The movie, book and live presentations have focused primarily on the climate crisis issue to date. Over the next year, however, the presentation will morph into more solutions-based information. Schools, businesses, governments, community groups and individuals can all do different and specific things to reduce their carbon footprint. Our presentations in the future will help support and facilitate those changes.

The Fredericton Green Matters campaign is an excellent example of what municipalities and engaged citizens can do to address climate change. In fact, thanks to connections made through The Climate Project, Fredericton is now mentioned at many presentations around North America for its unique and proactive steps towards curbing climate change. Congratulations, and keep it going here in our little part of the planet!

Peter Corbyn is one of two Al Gore trained Climate Change messengers in Atlantic Canada. Check out his new organization www.greennexus.com, and Al Gore's group in Canada at www.climateprojectcanada.org for more information.