



FAMILY
DAY

FOCUS

SUMMER
ISSUE 2026

Keeping the Environment Clean

Cutting down plastic waste so that the Great Outdoors can stay Great



MESSAGE FROM
DIANE DALEY, CEO

As the sunny days of summer are upon us at last, our thoughts turn to popsicles, picnics, beaches and building sandcastles.

And speaking of beaches, did you know that Canada is home to the world's longest coastline and one-quarter of the world's fresh water?

In this issue, we shine the spotlight on our planet and what we can do as families to nurture, support and protect it.

As Canadians, we must take action to reduce plastic pollution, help wildlife thrive and preserve the playgrounds, parks, forests and waterways that make our country one of the best places in the world to live.

It's more important than ever for individuals, businesses and government to change how plastics are designed, produced, used and disposed of—and we must work together!

Everyday citizens are leading the charge, taking action in a range of creative, practical and determined ways. Kirsty Lewis, a student completing her Bachelor of Science at the University of Waterloo (and daughter of Nicole Lewis, a Program Manager in Peel Region) is one of them.

We sat down with Kirsty to talk about her passion for saving our planet. She took time out of her demanding schedule to share information and practical ideas about how we can help.

I wish you and your family a happy, healthy, fun and safe summer. Embrace and enjoy everything this wonderful season has to offer!

As always, your trust in Family Day means everything. Thank you.

—Diane Daley, CEO





The plastic pollution crisis

Did you know that Canadians throw away nearly 5 million tonnes of plastic waste every year?

We see it all around us: parks and other green spaces strewn with plastic bottles and wrappers; plastic garbage floating in and washing up on the shores of lakes and rivers; overflowing landfills.

On top of these unpleasant sights, plastic pollution produces toxins that make water and food unsafe for

animals and fish. Every day, we breathe in tiny particles of microplastics that float through the air.

Plastic pollution is a real and growing threat to our planet. Many countries around the world have declared a pollution crisis and are working to restrict plastic production and invest in more and better recycling efforts.

Last year Kirsty had a booth at the annual Get Out and Move for Family Day (GOAM) event, where she and a fellow student taught Family Day children about how plastic pollution harms our planet. They also provided families with information about how they can help.

She says, "I have always been interested in the environment, exploring as a kid, and then finding my passion for science in high school. I started university to study biology, but I ended up falling in love with ecology, geography, and fighting climate change."

Kirsty believes that "helping doesn't mean picking up trash all day or eating only organic produce. You can help through educating yourself, buying only what you need, and reducing, reusing and recycling. I encourage everyone to explore all the ways to make a difference in their homes and communities."

Some of Kirsty's own efforts:

"Last summer as part of my course studies, I had the opportunity to travel to Ghana, West Africa. I saw how plastic pollution and climate change affects low-income fishing communities and the water safety for all Ghanaian people. I learned about the harms and dangers of plastic pollution that most people don't think about."

This summer, Kirsty will travel to the Bruce Peninsula, where she'll study the natural history of Ontario and how pollution and climate change is harming our land and water.



What can families do to cut down on plastic pollution?



1 Don't use or reduce your use of one time use plastic utensils, cups and plates, Ziploc bags, one-use-only containers and plastic shopping bags.

While all these things make our lives easier, they cause real harm to our environment. Switching to reusable water bottles, packing lunches in reusable bags or containers and stowing a cloth shopping bag or two in your car or purse can not only help our environment, but keep a bit more money in our wallets.



2 Think twice before you buy.

'Fast fashion' (inexpensive, trendy clothing and accessories) has become a big problem: businesses produce millions of items, only for them to go out of style quickly. This leads to the mass dumping of products in our landfills. When buying the newest trendy shirt, purse or cute toy for yourself or your family, be mindful of what they bring to your life. Will you or your child still want it a month from now?



3 Educate yourself about plastic waste.

There are so many resources. Kirsty recommends:

- **National Geographic Kids:** Reading and games for young audiences. kids.nationalgeographic.com/
- **The Plastic Detox:** A Netflix documentary about plastic pollution and our everyday lives. youtube.com/watch?v=Esd8PEWlt9w
- **The Plastic Problem:** A PBS documentary about how plastic pollution affects our planet. pbs.org/newshour/show/the-plastic-problem

All it takes is one Google search to be informed.





2 Donate.

Businesses can help charities and other organizations working to reduce plastic pollution in our communities.



What can businesses do?



1 Buy in bulk.

Whether buying cleaning products or food for meetings or parties, buying in bulk means less plastic packaging. Shopping in bulk can make a big difference in how much plastic is used every day.

3 Step up recycling in the workplace.

Sort trash properly, do research about what kind of items go in recycling bins in your local municipality, and clearly mark each bin.



4 Check out mindyourplastic.ca for more ideas to stop plastic pollution.



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PRINT
& POST

Let's be eco-friendly!



What can children do to reduce plastic pollution?



Reuse items.

Like old clothing, cardboard and plastic packaging, newspapers and magazines for play, crafts or gift wrap.



Pack a litter-less lunch.

Have children help make food and snacks at home and pack them in reusable containers. Lunches will be healthier, less expensive, and better for the planet.



Join or start an 'environmental club'.

At school or in your neighbourhood.
Host fun and educational activities.



Educate themselves.

About ways friends and family
can do their part.



Why is reducing plastic waste important for families?

Plastic pollution affects all of us, even if we can't always see the damage it does. While we can't eliminate all plastic from our lives, in many cases we can make changes to use less of it.

Kirsty says, "It's easy to think 'if I don't buy that plastic item, someone else will; what difference can I possibly make?' But think of it this way: if we all work together to make small changes, it can make a real difference! For example, the Terry Fox Foundation has raised over 1 billion dollars for cancer research, and all you had to do was donate a toonie. If everyone made small changes to help reduce plastic pollution, imagine what our planet might look like in the future!"

Sources:

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Greater Toronto

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- Licensed Home Child Care
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- Homework Plus

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