



Every year, Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation donors provide generous support to Conservation Authority initiatives that contribute to our shared vision of a cleaner and healthier Lake Simcoe watershed. The following is part of an information series on programs or projects supported by the Foundation.

Together we are making a difference.

Sprouting Seeds & Growing Minds

Aquatic plants are very important to the health of all water systems, including Lake Simcoe. These plants help absorb excess nutrients and heavy metals, which help improve water quality in local streams, rivers, wetlands and ultimately Lake Simcoe. They also provide much needed habitat and protection for fish throughout their life cycle.

In 2014, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) Environmental Outreach Educators first

introduced the Aquatic Plants Program to students in grades three to six. Just one of many of the innovative experiential education programs taught

by LSRCA's outdoor educators, Aquatic Plants teaches students to grow their own native aquatic plants right in the classroom and then plant them in the local eco-system. Students learn about the vital link between habitat, watershed and human health.

The program is very popular and has been quietly expanding. In 2016, a record 300 students from 14 classes in 8 different Lake Simcoe watershed schools learned about the importance of aquatic plants to watershed and personal health.

In 2017, terrestrial plants were added to enhance learning opportunities and complement the aquatic plant program. With this expansion, almost 350 students were part of the program and installed around 700 native aquatic and terrestrial plants. The program has "grown" again for 2018, under the name "Sprouting Seeds". There are now 462 students participating in these amazing hands-on experiences of **growing plants and growing minds!**

"Maple Grove Public School has worked nearly 4 years with LSRCA on both aquatic and terrestrial plant programs. These programs have allowed our students to understand the important role of native plant species and their role in the overall ecosystem of the area. It has also helped us to expand our "No Mow Zone" into a traditional Medicine Wheel Garden, and for us to become the first School Seed Library in Simcoe County." Greg Smith and Nancy Astin



Thanks to support from our donors, LSCF was able to help purchase seeds, soil and plants.