

Full-On-Fun at Cameron Recreation Centre Connecting Children with Nature through Playful Exploration in a Summer Day Camp

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Cameron Recreation Centre's Full-On-Fun Children's Day Camp took a turn to the "green side" a few years ago. Recreation Programmer Diane Moran had a vision: to provide a platform for



learning through play, that would inspire and educate participants to appreciate nature and take action to nurture the natural environment. Diane saw opportunities in the neighbourhood surrounding Cameron Centre, including the Jennifer Atchison Environmental Classroom and Stoney Creek Community Garden, located nearby at Stoney Creek Community School.

Diane worked with community stakeholders: The Stoney Creek Environment Committee, Stoney Creek Community School, the Community Garden Association and FUNREC summer program, to reshape the day camp into something new, green and eco-aware. Campers now spend one day of each week at the Environmental Classroom and Community Garden. They soak up the resources available to them in the classroom, help tend the garden through the dry summer months, and investigate plants, animals, fish and insects in the creek and forest surrounding the school. These experiences are enriched by sessions with guest educators, who guide the children to learn about topics like salmon habitat preservation, worm composting, recycling, urban wildlife, bear awareness, and wilderness safety.



At the recreation centre, campers enjoy games, arts and crafts, and



play activities to further their appreciation of nature around them. Last summer, a presenter from the Environmental Youth Alliance inspired the children to participate in a Web of Life art project. Out of that activity, a paper quilt project, coordinated by Diane, was exhibited in at the Hamada Museum of Children's Art in Japan.

