



Community Climate Action Heroes

Lessons from real world experience



Introduction

The Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF), an agency of the City of Toronto, has been providing grant support to community-based climate actions for over 15 years. Recently, the TAF Grants and Special Projects Committee requested that a study be prepared to review the experiences of recent TAF grant recipients and to gather their reflections on what makes a community climate action project successful. In the winter and spring of 2009, TAF's communications consultant, Brad Cundiff of Green Living Communications, interviewed 11 leaders of TAF-supported community climate projects from across Toronto and captured their insights both on paper and on video. Out of this, Brad has developed a short video presentation and this scoping paper, both of which are intended to start a conversation that builds on the insights of some of Toronto's most engaged "climate action heroes".

The interviewees were involved in a wide range of projects, from major building retrofits (Green Phoenix, Artscape Wychwood Barns, Evergreen Brick Works) and institutional change (University of Toronto Sustainability Office, University Health Network) to direct community engagement (Now House Community Retrofit Challenge, Canada-China Environmental Cooperation Council, Smart Commute North-Toronto Vaughan, Greening Sacred Spaces). This document is a brief summary of the thoughts and ideas from these leaders about how to craft effective programs, overcome obstacles and, ultimately, change cultures and mindsets. The paper has organized the responses into a set of theme areas to help guide subsequent discussion to take place at TAF's 2009 Dan Leckie Forum and beyond.

A video summary will also be available on the TAF website at www.toronto.ca/taf. For short descriptions of the actual projects, see Appendix A.

For more information about the Toronto Atmospheric Fund and its grants, loans and direct program activities, please consult our website at www.toronto.ca/taf.

Lessons learned

While the 11 initiatives undertaken by the interviewees were significantly different in content, some clear themes and patterns have emerged that cut across the variety of activity areas. This paper focuses on these common points that begin to reveal the characteristics of a successful community effort, what barriers must be overcome, and how to keep the momentum going once things get started.

These theme areas are illustrated with examples from the experience of the interviewees, and are intended to stimulate thought and dialogue about what might constitute the current "best practices" in community climate action.

Speak clearly to your target audiences

The more targeted the message, the more likely it is to hit the bull's-eye. Whether it is speaking to employees, managers, students or neighbourhood residents, it is important to distinguish between different audience segments and to frame your message to appeal to the motivations of that audience.

For Smart Commute, which is working to convince companies and their employees to rely less on single occupancy vehicles to bring employees to work, messages and framing for shop-floor employees are very different than for those in the executive suite. For executives, the message is centred on a solid business case for developing alternative transportation approaches, whether it is the costs of land acquisition for parking or the chance to improve employee retention by making commuting less of a grind. For employees, on the other hand, it is about addressing their concerns around convenience, safety and flexibility and offering workable solutions.

Similarly, at University Health Network, management clearly understands the cost control benefits of reducing energy demand in a huge facility that operates full throttle 24/7. For employees, however, there is no direct financial incentive and so the emphasis is on shifting cultural norms through leadership by example, such as making it the accepted norm to turn off lights or computers when leaving a room. Maintenance staff need a different message still, along with specific training — and reminders — about keeping building operating systems in peak running order.

For the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative's (TREC's) Our Power program, early adopters of renewable energy technologies are an important audience in terms of creating examples and overcoming obstacles for those who will follow. But their motivations are often quite different than that of the general public — they are motivated by interest in the technology and/or a deep environmental concern and are less concerned about barriers such as cost and the accessibility of the technology. So it is important to use this group to create examples of renewable energy use, while crafting subsequent messaging that addresses the issues of the cost and complexity of the solar installation for a less committed audience.

Even within a cultural community, such as the Chinese-Canadian community, messages need to distinguish between those who have already set down roots in Canada and new immigrants who are just establishing themselves here. For newer immigrants, greater cost consciousness around purchases can be countered by an equally strong interest in reducing energy use to save money as well as a greater familiarity with technologies such as solar hot water or high-efficiency lighting. Meanwhile, conservation practices may remain much more ingrained for newcomers versus settled immigrants who may have adopted more wasteful Canadian practices.

Residents in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood in downtown Toronto almost all live in high-rise buildings, which meant that messages in the smartliving St. Lawrence program had to be relevant to someone living in an apartment or condominium. Many conventional energy conservation programs were geared to single family homeowners, so the Eneract project team had to develop high-rise specific messaging from the ground up for the smartliving project.

Finally, it can be helpful to find a common bond that will motivate the community. For the Greening Sacred Spaces program, coordinated by Faith & the Common Good, the idea of “putting faith into action” has powerful appeal and also speaks to a broader societal interest in being able to act on our values. Climate campaigners who help channel values into action can create compelling messages.

Tap into existing networks

Part of understanding your audience is also understanding the best ways to reach them. Often, this involves using existing communication channels, both because these are more trusted and relied upon by community members and because this approach is more efficient than trying to establish your own direct channels (which may evolve from these more indirect channels over time).

In Topham Park, for example, the Now House Project discovered that the community not only shared a considerable inventory of post-Second World War housing, it also shared a passion for baseball. Community baseball leagues had woven tight social networks in the community and were a good way to publicize how the Now House project was demonstrating what could be done to improve the energy efficiency of local homes. The Now House team also discovered that the community grapevine was often more powerful than media networks, including email, for bringing community members out to events or technology demonstrations. Getting people with large social networks involved in the project, regardless of any existing involvement in environmental issues, was therefore key to engaging the broader community.

It's also important to identify the unique characteristics and interests of different audience clusters. The Our Power program, for example, found that early adopters of renewable energy technologies fall into two broad categories: those with a very strong understanding and interest in new technologies; and those strongly committed to environmental action who simply “want to do the right thing”. Further, within communities they have found that there are those with strong conventional neighbour-to-neighbour connections who can spread the word through community grapevines and those whose networks are much more virtual (Facebook, etc.) who will communicate to a more dispersed audience. Getting the right message out through all of these channels is key.

The Sustainability Office at the University of Toronto found that peer-to-peer student networking was a great way to encourage the uptake of the energy conservation messaging in its Rewire project. In residences, a student coordinator would convene meetings, information sessions and outreach on each floor. The coordinators were essentially providing students with both a way to act on their environmental values and to meet and socialize with other students in a setting where many students were looking for a way to establish new social networks in an unfamiliar community.

For smartliving St. Lawrence, a key focus was making neighbourhood residents more aware of existing programs and working with other program providers to extend these programs rather than “reinventing the wheel”. Working with an active residents’ association to scope out and deliver services was critical to the success of the project as it provided organizers with an in-depth understanding of the community and a recognized local agency to promote the messages.

Show, don't just tell

Particularly when it comes to new technologies or new approaches, practitioners find that being able to demonstrate how the technology works, what it can do and how it fits into an existing application is much more powerful than providing hypothetical information.

The Evergreen Brick Works initiative, for example, started off as a modest project to establish a native plant nursery. It has blossomed into a major urban redevelopment project, but those native plants still have an important role to play. Evergreen hopes that visitors will be inspired by what they see happening on the renewed Brick Works site and want to take a little bit of it home with them, in the form of native plants they have purchased at the Brick Works to plant in their own garden. The idea in a nutshell is “See it, learn about it, take it home.”

At Smart Commute, being able to present potential clients with documented cost savings and good levels of program participation in other businesses has been more persuasive than merely projecting potential savings.

The Canada China Environmental Cooperation Council (CCECC) had established a high profile in the Chinese-Canadian media as a source of environmental information. But the group also felt it was important “to walk our talk” by demonstrating the use of renewable energy technologies. They chose a high-profile location — Scarborough’s Chinese Cultural Centre — to install solar panels and an innovative vertical axis wind turbine. Not only have these installations helped raise awareness in the community, they also allowed the group to work with City officials to increase understanding of the new wind technology in particular. And the wind project has provided valuable real-world evidence to discount concerns about noise and vibrations.

Back at Now House, being able to show both homeowners and contractors how new technologies, such as spray-foam insulation, were being deployed was enormously valuable. Contractors, in particular, would mention that they knew of such products but had no experience using them, and seeing how they had been used in the Now House gave them greater confidence to try them. It also helped to reassure them that there were not going to be problems getting approvals. Some residents, on the other hand, had already done extensive research on the use of

such products and would come by to discuss the choices made by Now House and actual results as they considered their own options.

On a larger scale, the University of Toronto Sustainability Office’s assistance with a major lighting retrofit that, in turn, helped to finance a much needed chiller replacement program, helped to prove that this was a valuable direction for the university to pursue and helped to demonstrate that the Sustainability Office was really a “revenue centre” rather than a “cost centre”.

Similarly, at Smart Commute, being able to present potential clients with documented cost savings and good levels of program participation in other businesses has been more persuasive than merely projecting potential savings.

Be ambitious, but stay flexible

Setting ambitious project objectives makes sense in climate change work given the scale of transformation that will be required to meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Ambitious objectives and targets can help create greater momentum around the adoption of new technologies and help create pressure to remove policy or financial barriers. But ambitious projects also need a strong degree of flexibility to revise objectives and approaches when faced with unforeseen obstacles and delays.

The Parkdale United Church Foundation’s ambitious retrofit of its social housing complex, a project known as Green Phoenix, has seen its share of ups and downs. The Foundation, after a broad design consultation exercise, decided to embark on a “deep” retrofit that would include a number of renewable energy elements, including geothermal and solar hot water, in order to address the full range of comfort, cost and performance issues ingrained in the original design of the building. But a retrofit planned for two years is now entering its sixth, fortunately with the end now in site. Patience has been key on every front from fundraising to waiting for a cooler construction market.

Similarly, the Now House Community Retrofit Challenge project started off with a vision of reducing energy use in the Topham Park community by a significant percentage in just two years. The team quickly realized that the community could not be moved that fast and re-focused on creating a strong community group that could continue the work of raising awareness and providing assistance over the longer term. The group also learned that while their attempts at “open dialogue” with the community were respected, many community members really wanted more direction and a sense of priorities and were uncomfortable with a “blank slate” approach to goal setting. Meanwhile, the project designers at Work Worth Doing are now using the Now House experience to think more about how to “package” a retrofit for post-war housing.

And sometimes you just have to choose. At Artscape, plans for rooftop solar panels on the Wychwood Barns had to be jettisoned when they conflicted with plans for more practical — from both a cost and environmental standpoint — grey water recovery system.

Setting ambitious goals is also a way of inspiring participants. At Greening Sacred Spaces, a target of retrofitting 10 percent of faith spaces across Canada provides motivation for faith communities to lead by example and work together for a common purpose. Similarly, the Our Power program offers participants an exciting vision of a clean, renewable energy future without underplaying the significant hurdles that will need to be overcome. Instead, they motivate community members to be part of a “game changing” renewable energy movement that will result in a transformation of our energy systems.

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Creativity is the best resource

Most organizations involved in community climate action work have limited resources that are, for the most part, already stretched to the limit. For them, the old adage that “necessity is the mother of invention” couldn’t be more true.

At the Brick Works, for example, Evergreen faced the challenge of bringing people to an environmental education site that is hard to access except by car and virtually cut off from the city that surrounds it. Now, the group is turning this difficulty into a plus by working with the City to re-organize bus routes and link up walking and biking trails to create better access to the Brick Works site and improve existing green corridors in the Don Valley.

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Conventional horizontal axis wind turbines need wide open areas with nice steady winds — not exactly a description of most urban environments. So when the CCECC wanted to demonstrate wind power in the city, it turned to a group member’s own design for a unique vertical axis wind turbine that is both lower profile (blends more easily into the city environment and architecture) and that can deal with the turbulence of city air.

For Smart Commute, acres of free parking at suburban offices and factories make it difficult to convince employees to leave their cars at home. But Smart Commute helps companies realize that this parking is actually quite costly — in terms of land use, maintenance and expansion costs. They can then sell companies on alternatives, like subsidized transit passes, van pools or other options.

Finally, creative messaging can also help to re-frame a problem. As part of Greening Sacred Spaces, youth at a Scarborough mosque promoted reducing the water flow at taps used for ablutions by pointing out that conserving water, as a way of conserving one of the gifts of creation, should be seen as a sacred act rather than an inconvenience.

Use larger challenges to drive policy solutions

Today, you cannot walk into a retail store and walk out with a ready-to-install solar system. In fact, getting information and quality advice on many energy-saving actions is an uphill climb for even the most experienced environmental advocates. Making climate solutions more accessible is a key part of many climate projects.

At TREC, for example, the goal of the Our Power program is to transform residential solar technology from an “early adopter” purchase to an “easily adopted” social norm. By creating demand through community buying clubs and other channels, TREC hopes to support the nascent Canadian solar industry. Growing demand also forces issues like building permit challenges to the surface where they can be openly acknowledged and resolved. The group also works to improve conditions for use of distributed solar energy by addressing everything from provincial feed-in tariffs to local grid hook ups. It’s really simple mathematics: politicians and utilities are much more responsive when 5,000 citizens request a service instead of just five or 10.

However, change rarely happens overnight, and that is why groups like Smart Commute often pursue a two-track strategy of promoting incremental improvements such as volume discounts for transit or integrated fare zones, while pushing at the broader policy level for better planning rules and approaches that make transit more viable. Again, pressure to bring about the larger changes is fed by the growing demand for transit created by the smaller incremental changes.

Be ready to hit the wall – and then scale it

An idea that looks great on paper will often fail in the real world. The reason can be anything from the idiosyncrasies of human behaviour (“I love my car”) to unforeseen barriers (“We’ve never connected solar panels to the grid before”). It is important to understand the specific barriers to the successful implementation of an idea and develop a plan to directly address these.

At Smart Commute, for example, getting commuters to consider car pooling requires addressing concerns about safety, comfort and convenience. Its “Car Pool Zone” service allows potential car poolers to select their ride partners in a number of ways, from confining it to coworkers only or by choosing car-pool mates with similar taste in music. They are also addressing the convenience factor by working with companies to offer an “emergency ride home” service for those who need to get home quickly — to pick up a sick child, for example.

When the barriers are more bureaucratic, it is often because issues and questions are arising that officials have rarely — if ever — encountered before. But this can become a co-operative learning experience. CCECC, for example, used the process of erecting their building-mounted wind turbine to expose building officials to this new technology, while agreeing to make some height compromises until concerns about safety could be overcome.

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Hold their hand and provide safety in numbers

Particularly when trying to reach audiences beyond the “early adopters”, it is important to provide reassurance that there will be support and assistance throughout the change-making process, whether it is installing solar panels, car pooling or embarking on a home retrofit.

At Now House, for example, they found that many homeowners “didn’t want to be the first on the block, but were happy to be the second” when it came to implementing eco-friendly measures. And having a hands-on example of where technology like solar hot water or spray-foam insulation was being used in a house just like their own was enormously valuable for convincing homeowners that these ideas were practical and safe.

For solar pioneers, community buying clubs have been enormously successful in creating a sense that “You’re not in this alone.” They take some of the technical legwork out of system selection and create a natural peer-to-peer marketing network as neighbours watch what is happening on their street or find themselves at a community meeting populated with familiar faces. It has also been important for those taking the lead on home solar installations to see larger institutions, including the City of Toronto itself, installing the technology. This gives the technology something of an official seal of approval that increases the comfort level among average citizens.

Provide feedback to move people forward

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the scope of environmental problems and many people tend to use this sense of “I can’t change anything” as an excuse for not changing behaviours or actions. So it is important to send a message that there is a place to get started and that results will follow.

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Smart Commute, for example, encourages car commuters to experiment with transit and car pooling by using these transportation modes a couple of times a week and have found that this is more effective than a simple “leave the car at home” message. They also try to provide feedback to participating workplaces on what the collective efforts of those using transportation alternatives are adding up to in terms of greenhouse gas and air polluting emission reductions — and money saved.

At the University of Toronto, the Sustainability Office is developing a revolving fund that will serve as a positive feedback mechanism for departments that undertake energy efficiency improvements. It is hoped that the fund will lower the upfront cost barrier of undertaking retrofits or other efficiency measures while growing over time, thanks to the savings these retrofits generate. Both University of Toronto and the University Health Network make extensive use of reminders and prompts to try to make energy-saving actions a habit for staff and students. In fact, University Health Network is borrowing the idea of simple checklists from the surgical department (“Do we have all the sponges?”) and applying it more broadly to energy-saving actions across the hospital (“Have you turned off your computer?”).

Cover your bases – and your baselines

Obviously, having a good sense of direction and a clear destination is going to make any trip smoother. The climate action journey is no exception to this rule. Baseline studies, whether these involve quantification of current energy use or surveys of attitudes, are critical for figuring out where you are now and where you'd like to go.

The reality of this kind of work, however, is that you have to “plan and implement” almost simultaneously. At the University Health Network, they have been able to establish good baselines on energy use, but assessment of community marketing materials and approaches has been much more “on the fly”.

For the Now House project, an initial community survey was very useful for understanding the level of awareness of energy-saving actions and services and barriers to the adoption of better energy practices.

When a project involves implementing new or less familiar technologies, it is important to find consultants or engineers with a good understanding and experience with the technology. At the Artscape Wychwood Barns, for example, geothermal wells were lined with plastic, which proved no match for the strong hydrological pressure in the soils on the site. The wells eventually had to be re-lined with steel sleeves.

For the Parkdale United Church Foundation, hiring a project coordinator for the Green Phoenix project provided much greater comfort in taking on technologies such as solar hot water and geothermal because it gave them the organizational capacity to carefully research options and to find the right expertise.

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Following the money can get you lost

The nature of funding for most community climate projects is short-term grants. This can strongly skew projects in a number of ways and make it difficult to maintain a strategic long-term focus. Groups need to be able to navigate past short-term funding-based objectives using a longer-term strategy.

The Parkdale United Church Foundation, for example, found that the structure of current funding programs really pushed it toward more of a piecemeal approach to retrofitting its social housing building and away from the holistic approach that it knew would produce better overall results. Staying true to the holistic approach has required patience and a willingness to extend project deadlines in order to find the right funding.

Similarly, Evergreen has found it is much easier to organize a funding announcement photo opportunity than to get the money into the bank for the Brick Works project. That has resulted in a start-stop approach that has again required patience and discipline in holding to the full original vision for the site.

Plan your exit

For many community projects, the ideal outcome is for the community to take ownership of the project and carry it forward. Acknowledging the need for an exit plan at the beginning of a project can help lay the foundation for a successful transition later on.

The Now House team, for example, is hoping to see its vision for the community carried forward by the citizen-led Topham Park Eco Team. But to help the group get on its feet, Now House staff is helping the team with fundraising to ensure a successful start.

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TREC is dealing with a much more dispersed community and its strategy is to create online organizing tools that community groups anywhere can use to develop solar buying groups and to provide advice and guidance to those contemplating installing solar systems. Its website currently provides step-by-step guidance on developing a community buying club (as well as hosting sub-sites for these groups) and has a “Wiki” component for solar information sharing.

For Greening Sacred Spaces, an important strategy is congregation-to-congregation support as faith groups look to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings. To help this process along, they have created a do-it-yourself kit for retrofitting old buildings and have compiled specialized advice for faith buildings, such as how to draftproof stained-glass windows.

Having a full-time program coordinator in the community was really key to the success of the smartliving St. Lawrence program, both in terms of raising the project profile and tailoring the program to the needs of the community. Unfortunately, funding was only available to keep this person in the neighbourhood for two years. A longer period of presence would have allowed the project to set down deeper roots and could have better prepared the community for taking over direction of many of the program elements.

Let the lights shine

Telling the story of your group’s successes and even failures is not just good for others, who can learn from your experience, it is also good for you.

The Green Phoenix team, for example, has found that telling the story of its extensive retrofit to other groups helps to create a sense of accomplishment and pride that has helped reinforce its commitment to moving forward, particularly during tough periods.

Smart Commute North Toronto-Vaughan was one of the province’s first transportation demand management groups. A number of similar Smart Commutes are now in operation across the GTA, which has created great opportunities for collaboration, both in learning what works and what doesn’t and in sharing the cost of developing materials or programs.

Have fun and celebrate

Having fun may be the most overlooked strategy for creating a successful community climate project, but it is one of the most important. The challenging nature of community climate action work makes celebrating milestones important. When setbacks are almost certain, coming up with strategies to keep outlooks positive is important in order to maintain energy among volunteers and staff. The Parkdale United Church Foundation board, for example, makes it a habit to have dinner together before every board meeting — a way of relaxing and strengthening interpersonal ties before getting down to the tough business of sorting out problems or figuring out a way around obstacles.

Similarly, the public is more likely to be drawn to a project that has some social or fun elements rather than one that is filled with heavy messaging. A serious message wrapped in something like a strawberries-and-asparagus community social goes down much easier.

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Appendix A

Organizations and programs featured in this report

Artscape: Wychwood Barns. Artscape creates live/work spaces for artists and has a number of successful projects throughout Toronto. It worked with the City of Toronto to “re-purpose” the long dis-used Wychwood streetcar barns into studio, gallery and living spaces with the smallest possible environmental footprint. A major emphasis for the project was the use of existing structures and materials with the objective of obtaining LEED Gold certification. The Barns also include the STOP Community Food Centre and a large greenhouse used for both supplying the food centre and for teaching about food. Among the energy-saving technologies at use on the site are geothermal heating and cooling and grey water recovery and reuse. Its green features draw numerous visitors, from the surrounding community and further afield, and many of the artists in residence are now integrating green themes into their work.

Canada China Environmental Cooperation Council: Promoting Energy Alternatives in the Chinese Community. CCECC chose to install solar and wind technologies at the high-traffic Chinese Cultural Centre in Scarborough as a way of highlighting the potential of these technologies within the Chinese-Canadian community. A small solar system and a novel vertical axis wind turbine now help to power the centre and have been highlighted in outreach to the Chinese community media. The program is also a technical pilot for a type of wind technology with high potential in urban areas, where winds are too turbulent for conventional turbines.

Eneract: smartliving St. Lawrence. Together with the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association, Eneract developed a program to improve the liveability and sustainability of a high-density, high-rise downtown Toronto neighbourhood. On the energy efficiency side, the program worked to specifically address the needs of high-rise dwellers, an often overlooked group when it comes to conservation programs. A community coordinator worked closely with residents to enhance existing community programs and to start new programs (such as conservation committees at condos) that would fill program gaps identified by the community itself.

Evergreen: Brick Works. The massive Don Valley Brick Works site is being transformed into a leading edge demonstration of urban sustainability practices by the Evergreen Foundation. Intimately linked to the history of Toronto, the Brick Works is also an important ecological and geological resource in the heart of the city’s Don Valley. One of the goals of this ambitious project is to reconnect the previously abandoned site to the city that surrounds it and to make car-free access to the site much easier. The site is destined to become a major community hub for demonstrating and teaching about green practices.

Faith & the Common Good: Greening Sacred Spaces. Sacred spaces come in a wide range of shapes, sizes and ages, but their congregants share a common commitment in the protection of creation. This program helps stewards of sacred spaces to reduce energy costs and their communities’ environmental footprint by improving the energy performance of places of worship and associated buildings. It is tailored to the specific needs of such spaces, addressing issues such as draftproofing stained glass or ensuring kitchens and community dinners produce less waste. A key element of the program is organizing “Green Teams” to lead greening efforts within each community or facility.

Net-Zero Energy Home Coalition: The Now House Community Retrofit Challenge. The Net-Zero Energy Home Coalition won a CMHC competition to develop a net-zero (zero net energy use) home, except that rather than building an advanced house from scratch, they chose to extensively retrofit a post-war bungalow in the Toronto neighbourhood of Topham Park. There are close to one million post-war homes in cities across

Canada. These pre-fab homes were erected in as little as 48 hours to accommodate returning Second World War veterans and their families. The coalition then used the retrofitted house as a jumping-off point to interest neighbourhood residents in Topham Park in improving the energy efficiency of their own homes.

Parkdale United Church Foundation: Green Phoenix. This ambitious retrofit project aims to make a 30-year-old residential high-rise much more energy efficient and comfortable for residents. Based on the outcomes of an extensive design charette, the retrofit seeks to integrate a wide range of “deep” measures, from structural repairs, better ventilation and new windows to geothermal heating and cooling and solar hot water, to maximize both the economic and environmental gains of the retrofit. As a social housing provider, the foundation is strongly motivated to reduce operational costs while also acting as a good neighbour by adopting advanced environmental practices.

Smart Commute North Toronto-Vaughan: Transportation Demand Management. Smart Commute NTV has been a pioneer in working with workplaces to reduce single-user car-based commuting. It has developed programs such as Car Pool Zone and an emergency ride home program while also promoting bulk-buy transit discounts and other incentives to its clients. Smart Commute also works at a provincial and municipal policy level to encourage better transit and better infrastructure for cycling and walking.

Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative: Our Power. The Our Power program strives to make renewable energy technologies more accessible to average citizens. It uses tools like community buying groups, online calculators and community marketing to help citizens better understand renewable technologies such as solar and to increase acceptance of these technologies in our communities. The Our Power program is also a tool for increasing demand for solar energy products, and therefore industry capacity, and for demonstrating to governments the potential for distributed renewable energy technologies.

University Health Network: Energy Management & Engagement Program. UHN is the largest health care provider in Toronto and runs numerous facilities, including some that are quite new and some that are more than a century old. Many of these facilities operate 24/7 meaning that energy management is a major concern. UHN has taken a couple of different approaches to better manage energy use: It has done an extensive retrofit and re-tuning of energy management systems to improve performance while improving training for staff; and it is implementing a social marketing style program to encourage greater awareness of energy conservation among its large and diverse staff.

University of Toronto: Sustainability Office. The Sustainability Office assists the university with its goal of being a leader in environmental practices and performance. It has supported a major energy retrofit and has developed a very successful social marketing program for students, called Rewire. The office regularly collaborates with academic and facilities staff in order to advance energy efficiency on campus and to increase understanding of how to make programs and technologies more effective. It is now developing a revolving Sustainability Fund that will help individual departments to undertake energy retrofits.

 **TORONTO** Atmospheric Fund

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