



NEWS

Best of Toronto: Green

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Best green group

Greenpeace Canada

www.greenpeace.ca

GP has jumped back on the scene with kick-ass stunts: dumping mock radioactive waste on Dalton McGuinty's campaign office; stopping a 30,000-tonne coal shipment to Nanticoke; padlocking themselves to Harper's house (effectively putting him under "house arrest" for being a "climate criminal"); and locking themselves into boreal-forest-killing Kleenex's headquarters. Kudos for scoring a UN nod for protecting the ozone layer over the past 20 years.

Best green store

Grassroots

372 Danforth, 416-466-2841 • 408 Bloor West, 416-944-1993

www.grassrootsstore.com

How could we fill this slot without tipping our hats to the greenest one-stop shop for ecologically conscious consumers since 1994? Every earth-loving product you can think of is in here, from organic sheets, biodegradable pens and natural beauty products to solar-panelled backpacks. Bonus points for coolifying their clothing selection over the last year.

Best green activist:

Keith Stewart, climate change campaign manager, World Wildlife Fund, www.wwf.ca

If you like clean air and polar bears, you want this man in your corner. His planet-saving bio goes on for miles, but a quick peek tells you the affable ecohead helped found the Low-Income Energy Network, penned the influential Smog Report Cards while at the Toronto Environmental Alliance and is now fighting dirty power and bringing street cred to the WWF. And he does it all with a sense of humour and purpose that does the cause proud.

Best up-and-coming green store

Heart on Your Sleeve

61a Bellevue, 416-999-2197 www.heartonyoursleeve.ca

The adorable Kensington newby stocks only the styliest in organic fashions, with strict stipulations that they be made in Canada, sweatshop-free and vegan. It's enough to get any green fashionista's heart beating.

Best green business

Natural Burial Cooperative

www.naturalburial.ca

Yes, it sounds a little creepy, but anyone who brings both enviro and cooperative ideals to the otherwise overpriced and deeply polluting funeral biz deserves credit. Plus, having your bones buried under a tree is a good way to keep developers off our greenspaces.

Best green building
St. Gabriel's parish
650 Sheppard East, 416-221-8866

Talk about taking the environmental cause higher. This is the first church in Canada to meet stringent LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) certification. Stained glass has been replaced by a thermal glass wall, a "living wall" of plants purifies the air in the front entrance, and the building uses 40 per cent less energy than a new church built to code, reminding parishioners that the Virgin Mary isn't the only sacred mother.

Best green initiative

Local Food Plus
www.localflavourplus.ca

If you could take the most sustainable ideas from every green food camp and roll it into one big tasty label, you'd get Local Food Plus. These guys are putting the heart back into local food by folding in organics, worker rights, animal rights and energy-efficient practices. Our mouths are watering in anticipation of the day we see it on more store shelves.

Best green house in the making

Now House
12 Topham www.nowhouseproject.com

Sure, you can spend big bucks on a brand new eco-friendly building, but show us how to turn a leaky, creaky WWII-era home into a lean, green near-zero-energy housing machine and you can inspire a movement. After they're done with this one pad in December, the good folks behind the Now House in East York are planning to convert 150 homes in that 'hood. Sign us up!

Best green farm

Plan B Organics
www.planborganicfarms.ca

You know their friendly faces from farmers' markets around town, but there's something much more radical happening behind the produce stands – community-supported agriculture. The young trio behind Plan B open their 50-acre farm up to "shareholders" who essentially subsidize the farmstead in exchange for weekly fresh organic food boxes. It's just the kind of connection-building from field to table that gets us giddy.

Best social enterprise

Centre for Social Innovation
215 Spadina, suite 120, 416-979-3939

Enter the incubator's 18,000 square feet in the Robertson building on Spadina and you'll find a bustling community of 85 NGOs, artists and conscious businesses who share meeting rooms, phones, kitchen facilities and more – all with the aim of lowering costs and fostering community innovation. Interestingly, the centre was co-founded by the building's landlord, Urbanspace Property Group, the conscious peeps behind 401 Richmond and the Gladstone.

Best community project

Toronto Environmental Alliance's Secrecy is Toxic Map
www.secrecyistoxic.ca

TEA has called on residents to snap pics and write stories about toxic concerns in their 'hoods to create an innovative online map of T.O. Now, if only the city and the province would adopt community right-to-know laws, we should be able to fill that map out nicely.