Teamwork

By all measures, 2012 was a year of formidable challenges and accomplishments for The Riverwood Conservancy. We grew our audiences and moved programs forward thanks to the collective efforts of volunteers, staff, and Friends of Riverwood. Here is a snapshot of the metrics:

- 592 volunteers
- 16,122 hours contributed by volunteers
- 3,926 hours contributed by garden volunteers
- 5,805 guests explored nature in Discovery@Riverwood
- 21,065 Discovery guests since 2009
- 4,010 students safely learned about the environment in our Education Program
- 24,374 students since 2005
- 17 Art Naturally programs provided in partnership with Visual Arts Mississauga
- 418 stewardship, education and gardening programs offered
- 11 Night Sky Astronomy programs
- 33 special needs ErinoakKids in 3-week summer Camp Riverwood
- 550 Friends of Riverwood
- 3 new bird species spotted, raising the total to 184
- 20,000 (approx.) people reached through programs and community engagement initiatives
- 1 new Volunteer Garden Tour Guide program introduced
- 20,600 wildflower seeds collected and sown in the Native Plant Propagation Program
- 77 high school students gardened and stewarded at Riverwood
- 1,925 hours contributed by high school students
- 135 participants in 12 pilot programs in The Enabling Garden
- 27,825 reaches on Facebook by new and existing friends
- 3 gardens dismantled (temporarily) due to Chappell House construction
- 27 artichokes and 23 bushels of Canna harvested (help!)
- 225 tickets sold at the 11th Earth: A Celebration, a record
- $13,800 sponsorship value at Earth, a record
- 11 dedicated directors (and we’re looking for new directors)
- 2 times we took a stand to protect Barn swallow habitat and received media coverage by the Toronto Star (a first)
- 1 new Development Officer
- 9 exceptional full- and part-time staff

Thank you all for supporting YOUR Riverwood Conservancy. We look forward to rising to the challenges that 2013 will bring, and with the assistance of the Friends of Riverwood, we’ll continue to improve the quality of life for people and wildlife in Mississauga.

Douglas Markoff, Executive Director

How About Those Chickadees?

A few years ago, while walking down the Spruce Alley at Riverwood with a class of students, I noticed a Chickadee following us. At the back of our line of children was one of our York University students. It so happened that this student always carried sunflower seeds for his snacks. Recognizing a teaching moment, I suggested he put some sunflower seeds on an outstretched palm and see what happened. To everyone’s delight (including the young man’s) a Chickadee landed on his hand and took a seed. That is how our Chickadee program began. It only takes a seed to grow a program!

Rita Schulze, Education Naturally Teacher
SAMARA Annual Report Message

2012 was another year of progress and growth at Riverwood. Completion of the new MacEwan Terrace Garden and The Riverwood Conservancy Enabling Garden were the most visible expressions of this growth. The year also saw continued focus on our core programs: stewardship, environmental education, gardening and volunteerism. The extent of public participation in our stewardship and educational programs is often highlighted but we should never overlook the contribution of our volunteers. Currently they number about 600 individuals who collectively provided over 16,000 hours in support of our operations. This is a very significant contribution without which our core programs would be unable to function. On behalf of the board of directors I would like to express our gratitude to all volunteers, and to emphasize how very much your time and energy are appreciated.

TRC heads into 2013 confident of seeing further growth and progress. June will see the official opening of both the MacEwan Terrace Garden and the Enabling Garden, and the associated publicity will undoubtedly attract increased attention and visitors to Riverwood. Planning for continued future growth remains a Board priority. Increasingly, such growth will depend upon our ability to successfully fundraise. During the past year significant steps were taken to further develop our fundraising ability. The fund development committee has been reinvigorated and a new staff position—Development Officer—created. Despite these challenging economic times, by year-end these efforts were beginning to bear fruit and I am confident that 2013 will see new sponsors come on board.

Our current financial position is sound and we will continue to prudently manage our resources. Programs will be implemented and costs incurred only if the required funds are available. We will continue to develop our on-going relationships—not only with our community partners, the City of Mississauga, Credit Valley Conservation, the Peel District School Board and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board—but also with our generous donors and sponsors. Last, but not least, we have in place strong and experienced management and staff that are well able to implement the Conservancy’s long-term plans.

On behalf of the board I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all our volunteers, dedicated staff, valued community partners, and generous donors and sponsors—collectively, the Friends of Riverwood, for their significant contributions and on-going support of the unique community asset we know as The Riverwood Conservancy.

Martin Robinson, Chair, Board of Directors

Education Report 2012

2012 was marked with several significant challenges and changes. Our chair for the last few years, Dr. Kevin Saldana decided to resign and was replaced by co-chairs Stephanie Grant and Margaret Ramsey. We are pleased that Kevin remains an active member of the Education Committee and equally pleased with the new initiatives the co-chairs bring to their roles.

Education Naturally continues to serve the needs of the elementary classes in Peel Region. Despite a somewhat slower start in September due to teacher protests against Bill 115 this program continues to perform well and TRC fostered an appreciation of the environment in over 4,000 students.

Exploration Naturally welcomed Greg Hart as teacher. The addition of Greg, coupled with the new Secondary High Skills Majors program and Field Science Certificate program have helped propel our secondary school science experience to close to 1,000 students.

Discovery @ Riverwood also enjoyed a strong year with over 100 programs. Close to 6,000 Mississaugans attended a variety of free programs thanks to a grant from Credit Valley Conservation. Collectively, TRC offered, on average, over two public programs for the community per week, including natural areas stewardship, gardening and public activities.

Between teacher actions, staff changes and new programs the year will go down as one that we can look back with some pride upon our positive response and growth.

Dave Taylor, Education Program Director/Consultant

We Remember

The Riverwood Conservancy remembers and honors the memory of our Friends of Riverwood and wish to express our sincere condolences to the families and friends of:

Jan Bayes (Education Naturally volunteer)
Peter Orphanos (Stewardship and Education Committee Chair, former Board member)
Dick Stackhouse (Former Secretary to the Board)
Stewardship Committee 2012 Annual Report
The Challenge of Change

Native Plant Propagation Program - Left to Right - standing: Stephanie Hill, Janice Ekeland
sitting: Carolin Smart, Sean Stuckless

Living in a country that has 4 very different seasons is one of the joys of being Canadian. It gives us challenges and opportunities, and forces us to be adaptable. This certainly applies to the mandate of the Stewardship Committee. We are looking forward to a new year working with TRC’s new Stewardship Coordinator, Brea Kroecker, who replaced Claire Ellenwood. Jessika Corkum-Gorrill has changed her role with the City of Mississauga, and John MacKinnon is the new representative for the City on the committee. Chelsea Dalton is the University of Toronto Mississauga rep, replacing Aubrey Iwaniw. MJ Kucerak, after doing a great job building the foundations of the Native Plant Propagation Program, has passed the baton to Stephanie Hill, who did an amazing job last year. Stephanie won the TRC Stewardship Award for 2012.

Student volunteers and corporate groups removed many invasive plants from the Mouse Trail and along the Heritage road in 2012. Plant propagation volunteers added native plants to the Mouse Trail, Heritage trail, MacEwan Terrace and the slope near the old Tennis Court. Renee Wazonek and Margi Shah conducted a White Pine study. They researched the state of Ontario’s official tree at Riverwood (size, health, regeneration, number of trees downed by wind) and their report will be forthcoming this spring. This was the first TRC intern project and we are looking for other post-graduates no longer affiliated with universities to do other natural history studies at Riverwood.

With all these new people, the Committee has a great opportunity to build and grow the natural areas stewardship programs at Riverwood in 2013. It is a challenging task, but the Stewardship Committee is making a difference.

Howard Hall, Chair Stewardship Committee

Leave it to Beaver (Part I)

Our resident beaver family has moved from its former lodge. Where? We do not know, but it can be safely assumed that the adults have moved to a new location someplace along the Credit River. Perhaps on Riverwood’s section, perhaps not. If you walk along the Culham Trail you will see ample evidence of their work over the past few years, especially in the area where the fishermen access the river. The stumps of trees harvested by these large rodents dot the flood plain.

New research has shed light on the importance of the beaver to ecosystems. Their presence can help stabilize the water table for about 200 meters around their pond. Considering that prior to 1492 beavers were found in well over 80% of all the drainage systems in North America, their impact was significant. Our beavers do not build dams on the Credit River because of frequent flooding, but they still manage to create a healthy environment by opening up the forest cover and creating new habitats for other wildlife.

We may look at them as nuisances when they flood our roads and fields, but we should also remember the lesson of the 1920s. By the 1840s, the beaver was extirpated from much of its range, and its numbers were greatly reduced due to fur trapping. There is growing evidence that suggests that the effect of the 1920s Dust Bowl would have been greatly mitigated had beavers still existed in the Great Plains. They help reduce the effects of drought. Last year’s drought in the United States may be a taste of things to come. Perhaps beavers can change the course of history once again. After all, they helped create Canada.

Part II: Next Issue will update our beaver’s story based on research carried out by UTM over the winter.

Dave Taylor, Education Program Director/Consultant
THE ENABLING GARDEN from Spring to Winter 2012

It's early spring and The Riverwood Conservancy Enabling Garden is a vision not quite realized. Three empty rectangular cut-outs are the only indication that plans are underway for something special.

By summer, a dancing Honey Locust provides movement and a splash of shade, flower beds are awash in scent, colour, and texture, and several large ceramic pots invite passersby to slow down, touch and smell the flowers. Participants in our therapeutic horticulture programs from Erin Oak Kids, the CNIB and several local schools can be seen planting seeds and flowers, watering and tending the garden. By fall, participants have grown and sampled herbs and vegetables, planted flowers and learned about garden maintenance. With the help of a team of volunteers, they have planted hundreds of bulbs in anticipation of a vibrant and colourful spring.

Now in December, covered with a light dusting of snow, the garden lies dormant. The concrete cut-outs have since been replaced with raised planting beds lined in aromatic cedar and designed for people with special needs.

Caring activities continue in the TRC Enabling Garden with Jane New and friend

The Enabling Garden's role at Riverwood is finally clear: this is a garden for people of all abilities.

Jane New, Enabling Garden Coordinator
David and Goliath: A Fable

Snow blankets Riverwood, forcing wildlife to hunker down for the cold winter. Only our hardiest and well-adapted animal friends remain. To ease their struggles, on a daily basis, volunteers brave the frosty air to fill platform stands with seed. Dave joins in and hangs feeders by the Chappell House. Woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees and cardinals all gather to feast on the bounty of sunflower seeds. The squirrels watch with envy.

Birds happily sing and dance, delighted with their situation. However, the squirrels are not happy. They scramble across the branches and clamor onto the feeders only to be thwarted by squirrel-proof mechanisms. Dave beams with pride and commends the ingenuity of the feeders. Finally, a squirrel gang chews through the lines holding up the feeders. To their joy the feeders and seed crash to the ground.

The following week Dave implements a chain and hook system to secure the feeders. He smirks, “Try to chew through that!” Once again, the feeders provide seeds for all our winged friends. However, the squirrels conspire and plot until they devise a new plan. Carefully, one climbs down the chain, grabs the feeder, lifts it free from the hook, and drops it, then other squirrels repeat the action. After they learn this trick, all the feeders again fall to the earth spilling their food for the squirrels to enjoy.

Upon discovery of this, Dave shrieks of rage.

Determined as ever, Dave attaches the feeders to their chains with metal locking clasps. For the next two weeks, birds flutter and feast. We’re thrilled to watch our winter friends sing and dance. Dave laughs at the frustrated squirrels and taunts, “I’ve sure shown you, pea-brained rodents.” Day after day passes, and we forget about the plight of the squirrels. Finally, one morning, we arrive to find the feeders lying on the ground as the squirrel plunder their spoils. Dave’s rage—and his blood-pressure—reach new heights. He inquires about traps and firearms.

To this day, Dave does not know how the squirrels got the feeders off the clasps. We do know, even though they don’t have feathers, squirrels have their role here helping our birds. Our obese squirrels keep hawks soaring through our woods.

Gregory Hart, Exploration Naturally Teacher

Fund Development Committee 2012

Over the last year we increased our fund development activity in order to reach more individuals, companies and foundations than ever before. This was a result of hiring a part-time Development Officer, Di Stafford, and reconstituting the committee with a larger membership.

Key in 2012 was to initiate operations funding searches for the new Riverwood Conservancy Enabling Garden. We hope to realise the fruits of our efforts over the next few months, but suffice it to say the new initiative was received by the community as enthusiastically as it was by prospective clients. We think this effort will be well funded in the future; there is a clear need for this kind of facility in the area.

Our budget slowly increases each year, and so the task of raising funds means that we need to continually develop new sponsors while working to maintain existing relationships. Each prospective funding partner group is different, has a different funding strategy and different recognition needs. This means we are always on the lookout for people and companies who would be attracted to our offerings. The list is diverse, and this year included Whole Foods Square One and Sunco Energy Foundation, in addition to our long-term sponsors such as Scotty Canada and the Scotiabank Group. For a complete list of sponsors and donors, please see our website and the Friends of Riverwood list in this report.

If you would like to join the team, please give us a call. The committee welcomes people with all kinds of skills, and we find the results of our work very rewarding, in all senses of the word.

Alan Lytle, Chair, Fund Development Committee
Marketing advances for 2012!

This year we had two Marketing Coordinators. We started with Madeha Khalid who went on maternity leave and was competently replaced by Lorrie Crow for the balance of the year. Between the two and their complementary skills, we increased the reach of The Riverwood Conservancy message into the libraries, Celebration Square, the City's blue pylon signs, 18 community centres, employment and immigration centres, adult education centres, Girl Guide leaders, and more.

We have continued to develop our online presence to reach the younger generation with encouraging response from Facebook and twitter contacts. Plans are underway to accomplish our long awaited website revamp and funding options are being sought from possible donors.

Not everything was in the human domain either! The barn swallows in the carport was the biggest press release story of the year, with coverage reaching the Toronto Star and the Mississauga News.

Once again thanks to Madeha and Lorrie and the host of volunteers who developed the messages, the new designs of the brochures, flyers, the Discovery@Riverwood calendar, TRC e-Newsletter, the images for the City's display screens, the press releases and the words for the articles, without which fewer people would know about our oasis in the city.

Alan Lytle, Former Chair, Marketing Committee

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2012 Gardening Report - A Year of Overcoming Challenges

As I reflect upon the 2012 gardening season at Riverwood, what springs to mind is how resilient, flexible, resourceful, and determined our gardeners were when faced with challenges.

Mother nature once again decided to put us to the test with early warmth, then overnight frosts, followed by weeks of heat and drought. Gardening volunteers, aided by continuous support from summer high school students, watered daily to keep the gardens looking colourful and healthy.

The rebuilding of many of the stone walls, terrace floor and carport at the Chappell House saw teams of gardeners removing plant material from the Native Garden and the Chappell Terrace Garden. Volunteers from Credit Valley H.S and TRC volunteers worked incredibly hard during the Spring Clean Up morning and deserve enormous thanks.

The Gardens Committee welcomed Jane New, the new Enabling Garden coordinator and were delighted to see pilot programs underway in the summer. Jane overcame the challenge of a delayed raised planter installation, but used the cutouts and containers in very creative ways. We thank her for all her hard work and patience.

In anticipation of our goal to offer tours of the gardens to the public, Garden Committee members and other volunteers spent many, many hours collecting information for the Garden Tour Guide Handbook. Special thanks to editor Kathy Lytle, Garry Watson for his 15-page history of Riverwood, and the Mississauga Master Gardeners who compiled an extensive plant database.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the gardening volunteers for your work in 2012. Whatever the challenges, big or small, you took them on with focus, determination and often a good sprinkling of humour. Thank you!

Linda Morris, Chair, Gardens Committee
Special Events Committee Annual Report 2012

2012 was a very busy year for the Special Events Committee. In February, Councillor Ron Starr held his first Family Fun Day event, supported by The Riverwood Conservancy (TRC), Visual Arts Mississauga, EcoSource and Credit Valley Conservation. April was a hectic month! First there was the Annual General Meeting, then Successful Gardening at the International Centre. With the help of many volunteers, we were able to showcase TRC and its achievements while meeting visitors from all over the country. After that we were tasked with planning and hosting the annual fundraising Earth: A Celebration gala at the Oasis Convention Centre in Mississauga on April 20th, and it was a huge success.

Music by the Sway Jazz Trio, Monarch mystery bags, silent, and live auctions were enthusiastically received. We raised over $30,000 at this event which is a superb accomplishment.

In July the Board of Directors and TRC Staff hosted the Annual Patio Party for members and Friends of Riverwood, and they also welcomed our many sponsors to a Fall Thank You Party in October. Both of these events were very well received and enjoyed by all.

As chair of Special Events, I cannot thank the members of this committee enough for all their hard work and dedication, ensuring all our events have a successful outcome. A very special thank you to Robin Haley-Gilllin for her amazing administrative skills; our sincere thanks, too, to the Board of Directors, volunteers, Executive Director Douglas Markoff and his exceptional staff for all their time, support and help. We could not have done it without you!

Shirley Daniels, Chair, Special Events Committee

Volunteer Committee Annual Report 2012

The Volunteer Committee enjoyed a busy and productive year, meeting our 2012 goals and setting new ones for the future.

Keeping our volunteers happy and satisfied is essential, so a survey was sent out to determine if changes are needed. Feedback showed overall satisfaction, with some excellent suggestions for improvement. Two subgroups were formed within the Committee, to address improvement in orientation and specific training, and policies for volunteers.

- Two First Aid sessions were offered during the year. These were free to volunteers.
- Once again we were delighted to host two events that allowed TRC to recognize and applaud the essential work carried out by our volunteers:
  i) A June Garden Tea Party at the Chappell House featured refreshments, live music and volunteers relaxing and chatting with friends both old and new.
  ii) In early December we hosted our Volunteer Celebration. Staff handed out awards, helping to make the evening a resounding success.

We had 200 volunteers active in 2012, plus over 200 from corporate groups, 29 placement students, 77 secondary and university students, and others for a total of 592 volunteers. Total hours contributed were 15,406—a slight drop due to lack of stewardship activities in the fall of 2012.

Our focus for 2013: Review and revise volunteer policies; create a complete orientation and training program for TRC volunteers, continue to provide area-specific training for volunteers, continue to support current volunteers, and recruit new ones.

Margaret Worth, Chair, Volunteer Committee

SAMARA
Volume 23, Issue 1 2012 Annual Report

Samara is the quarterly newsletter of The Riverwood Conservancy, 4300 Riverwood Park Lane, Mississauga, ON L5C 2S7. T: 905.279.5878. F: 905.279.4303.
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Web: www.TheRiverwoodConservancy.org

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CONSULTANT: Dave Taylor, Education Program Director. SAMARA Team: Douglas Markoff, Editor-in-Chief; Lorrie Crow and Rebecca Massey, Editors, Sean O’Rourke, Layout & Design. PHOTO CREDITS: Dave Taylor, Gregory Hart and David Tarrant.
Friends of Riverwood
Donors & Contributors 2012

TRC is very grateful for the contributions of products and services from these generous donors in 2012:

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Arpict Tree
Art Gallery of Ontario
Artisan Bakery Cafe
Arthur Beerman
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Winder Garden
Christopher Worth
Zen Aquascapes

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Funders 2012

TRC is very thankful for the generosity provided by these supporters during 2012:

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Marguerite Adamson
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Oswaldo Almeida & Claudia Christian
Stella Ambler
Jim Anderson
Applewood Garden Club
Applewood Village Dentistry
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Bob Askin
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Credit Valley Horticultural Society
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Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
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Elaine Smyth
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Richard & Jean Stockhouse
Diane Stafford
Philip Stuart
Dave & Anne Taylor
Carol & David Todchunter
University of Toronto, Mississauga
Michael Wheeler
Whole Foods Market
Square One
Grace Williams
Karen Williams
David & Betty Wilson
XPV Capital Corporation
Dawn Yeates
THE RIVERWOOD CONSERVANCY Condensed Financial Statements

Condensed Balance Sheet as at December 31

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* The Garden Development Fund includes $15,218 designated for the Enabling Garden.

Condensed Statement of Operations for the year ended December 31

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<tr>
<td>Memberships and donations</td>
<td>114,482</td>
<td>97,631</td>
<td>112,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated materials (Note)</td>
<td>42,387</td>
<td>34,941</td>
<td>28,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling Garden</td>
<td>13,477</td>
<td>24,155</td>
<td>80,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVC revenue</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>22,837</td>
<td>24,930</td>
<td>22,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>29,313</td>
<td>27,817</td>
<td>35,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>549,672</td>
<td>542,464</td>
<td>597,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and benefits</td>
<td>$322,511</td>
<td>$316,497</td>
<td>$274,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and other</td>
<td>116,418</td>
<td>96,279</td>
<td>96,147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enabling Garden capital</td>
<td>45,503</td>
<td>39,497</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling Garden operating</td>
<td>20,365</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased services</td>
<td>28,969</td>
<td>16,724</td>
<td>27,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated resources and materials (Note)</td>
<td>42,387</td>
<td>34,941</td>
<td>28,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>13,054</td>
<td>18,183</td>
<td>9,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>589,207</td>
<td>522,121</td>
<td>435,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excess of Revenue over Expenses</strong></td>
<td>-$39,535</td>
<td>$20,343</td>
<td>$162,468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
Volunteers contribute many hours each year in carrying out the organization's activities. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, most contributed materials are not recognized in the financial statements. However, during the year, the organization received contributed materials for which the fair market value was reasonably determined and these donations have been reflected as expenditures at the determined value. The condensed financial statements are extracted from the financial statements examined by our auditors, Newhouse Rusin LLP. A complete set of financial statements, together with the Independent Auditor's Report, is available on request from Douglas Markoff, Executive Director, The Riverwood Conservancy, 4300 Riverwood Park Lane, Mississauga, ON L5C 257.