2024 Annual Report



White-tailed deer | Photo by L I L I

Realizing our Vision

The Riverwood Conservancy

Stories from the land



Sara Wilbur-Collins and Heather Shaw accept the 2024 Mississauga Board of Trade Not-for-Profit of the Year Award

Have you ever heard someone say, “I don’t remember what I thought, but I remember how I *felt*”?

It’s a perfect phrase for the work we do at The Riverwood Conservancy. Almost daily, we hear about the impact our outdoor education, conservation, stewardship, and gardening programs have on people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds.

Many know that Riverwood is a beautiful 150-acre oasis near downtown Mississauga, one of Canada’s largest cities. What might be less well-known is how our programs help develop skills, ease anxieties, and promote wellness – all while protecting the beauty and the health of this wonderful natural space.

For our 2024 Annual Report, we’re sharing stories of those we have affected for the better. Whether about the thrill of seeing wildlife, knowing that there is a place to go after a bad day, or connecting with a loved one in the quiet of nature, these stories all add up to how we meet the needs of our community.

We impacted the lives of more than 19,000 people in 2024, each with their own Riverwood story. This year’s report also shares the story of our organization as a whole, in a year of great change.

Please read on to learn more. If we aren’t already, we hope to become a part of your story.

Sara Wilbur-Collins, CFRE
Executive Director

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The Riverwood Conservancy would like to acknowledge that the land on which we operate is within the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the traditional land of the Wendat Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This land is part of the Upper Canada Land Surrenders to the Crown. Today, the region surrounding Riverwood remains home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work here.



A cycle of inspiration

The Riverwood Conservancy has been, and will continue to be, an important community-focused organization that welcomes everyone.

We're thrilled when people visit, enjoy our beautiful gardens, hike our scenic trails, and learn about and celebrate the diverse ecology in this urban park, and appreciate how lucky we are to have all of this in the midst of our city!

The stories we hear from our participants and visitors help us understand the value of their experiences and why they want to keep coming back, and that in turn inspires us to do our best and continue to bring awe and excitement to our community.

As my term as Chair of the Board ends, I reflect on, and thank, the dedicated team of Directors and all our volunteers, who so generously give of their time, knowledge, and sweat (!) to ensure we govern aptly, support the delivery of our public and educational programs, caringly steward our land, and tend to our gardens to keep them blooming.

In 2024, we welcomed two new board members, Monica Jako and Imdad Junejo, whose experiences and perspectives add to our organization's work and success. Early on in 2025, we fondly bid adieu to two longtime Board Directors, Alan Lytle and Christina Woodward, both who have added so much value to our organization through their board work.

We are so grateful to continue to keep our community close to and connected with nature!

Heather Shaw

Heather Shaw
Chair of the Board of Directors

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2024 Board of Directors
~
Heather Shaw, Chair of the Board
Peeter Poldre, Vice-Chair
Elinor Laffey, Corporate Secretary
Tim Pickering, Treasurer
Swaroop Dogra, Member-at-Large
Alan Lytle
Amy Tjen
Christina Woodward
Clement Mbulu
Imdad Hussain Junejo
Jonathan Davis
Monica Jako
Peter Newsome



Roche employees in the field for a Conservation Crew program

When our Informatics team went to Riverwood, we started by clearing fallen branches out of a creek. It was amazing to see the techy nerds lift and get a bit messy. We were playing in the dirt and having fun. It was the beginning of a great annual event we all look forward to.

Magdalena Leonowicz
Scrum Master, Release Train Engineer, Roche Canada



Helping hands from around our community



Neli Brum *is the Communications & Philanthropy Senior Coordinator, Strategic Communications at Hoffmann-La Roche Limited (Roche Canada). Neli explains how volunteering through our Conservation Crews program has impacted some of Roche Canada's employees, and what it means for the organization.*

Our volunteer experience with The Riverwood Conservancy began in 2019 and has grown over the past few years. We were initially new to employee volunteering, but we quickly saw the value of partnering with The Riverwood Conservancy for the good of the community and our organization. The Conservancy's mission to protect and restore natural areas, educate the public, and engage the community in environmental stewardship aligns perfectly with our own sustainability goals.

Volunteering has offered our employees meaningful and enriching experiences that align with our values and commitments to community and environmental responsibility. When our employees come to Riverwood, they can step away from their daily routines, connect with nature, and work together towards a common goal.

Our experiences at Riverwood have fostered a deeper appreciation for the environment in our employees. At the same time, we've seen firsthand how the commitment and efforts of our volunteers have positively impacted the natural environment.

565
Trees planted through our conservation programs

4,200
Pounds of invasive garlic mustard removed from around Riverwood

1,519
Wildflowers planted around Riverwood

Strategy made real

Goals from our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan	Accomplishments in 2024
Protect and restore the diverse ecosystems, natural features, and wildlife populations of Riverwood and the surrounding area	Completed restoration work on the MacEwan Pond, including plantings in the area surrounding the new boardwalk
Design and maintain diverse and engaging gardens, expressing a vision that connects Riverwood with the community	Transformed an overgrown and unmanageable raspberry patch into our new Berry Bush Garden, which will showcase a variety of native berry-producing trees, shrubs, and perennials
Respond to the interests of diverse communities, especially Indigenous and newcomer communities, by responsively adapting program offerings	Continued our collaborative work with the Newcomer Centre of Peel, engaging 220 newcomers in nature-focused programs
Work with Indigenous communities to support their goals for wellbeing through programs and ceremonies at Riverwood	Hosted recurring Full Moon Ceremonies in partnership with The Indigenous Network, aligned with 20 Indigenous contributors for the planning and performances for Jingtamok
Spark wonder and delight by delivering high-quality outdoor education programming that engages children, youth, and their families	Expanded Camp Riverwood programming to include March Break and summer months, continued Junior Naturalists Club and Mini Naturalists Club programs
Support our mission and revenue goals with a comprehensive communications and marketing program	Increased social followers (across Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn) by 11% and increased website users by 8%
Commit to an inclusive and welcoming culture	Maintained signage that encourages visitors to feel belonging in nature, all staff participated in training for 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusivity
Enhance and expand fee-for-service offerings and donations	Achieved a 30% increase in sponsorships, a 17% increase in donations, and a 13% increase in program fees


New MacEwan Pond boardwalk

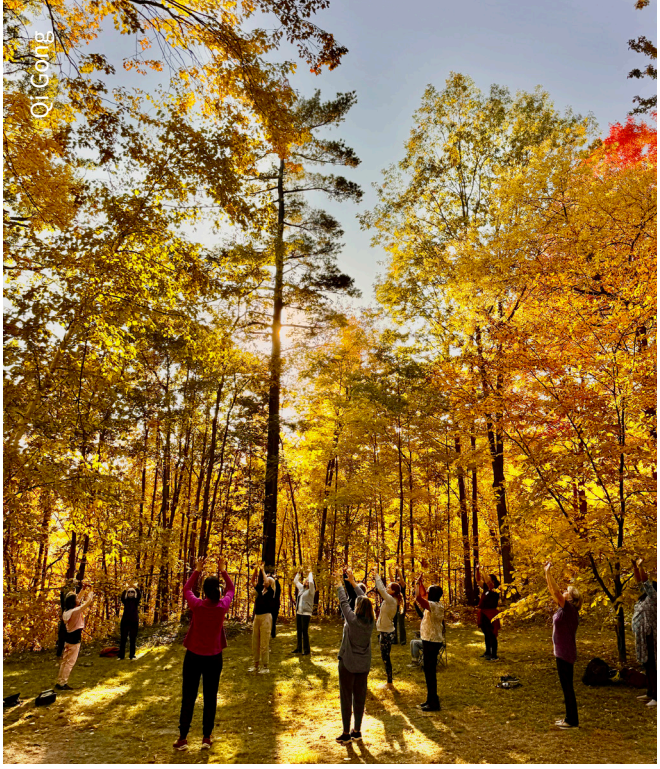

Initial work on the Berry Bush Garden



Mirrored signage in the park



Summer BioBlitz



Qi Gong

Birding and beyond



Michael Briem *became a member of The Riverwood Conservancy in 2023, and is a regular participant in our public programs. Michael tells us why those programs matter so much to him.*

215
Public programs delivered in 2024

6,000
Participants in our public programs

2,468
Citizen scientist observations recorded at our Summer BioBlitz

I first started attending programs because I wanted to learn more about birds, and a friend told me about The Riverwood Conservancy's birding programs. These programs provided the perfect coupling of a beautiful walk in nature along with observing birds in their habitat. It was because of those experiences that I then began participating in a variety of other nature-focused programs.

I have truly appreciated learning new things in the well-organized events that The Riverwood Conservancy offers. The presenters are extremely knowledgeable and make it a fun and interactive experience for everyone. It's also been a wonderful environment to meet and spend time with other like-minded people.

I believe that we all possess a natural curiosity about nature. The wide variety of wonderful programs that are offered at Riverwood have provided the perfect learning environment for experiencing the beauty of nature along with acquiring a better understanding on how we can interact with our surroundings in a positive way.

966
Volunteers engaged in 2024

10,743
Volunteer hours contributed

From students to volunteers – everybody learns!



***Pema Hou** is a gardens and bird feeding volunteer with The Riverwood Conservancy, and has been a frequent park visitor since the late 1990s. Pema shares what her experiences as a volunteer, and what Riverwood itself, mean to her.*

We are so fortunate to have this oasis in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of a big city. Volunteering at the park I love was a no-brainer. I learn so much every time I volunteer at Riverwood, whether it's while planting perennials in the gardens, removing invasive garlic mustard and buckthorn in the restoration areas, or cleaning and replenishing the bird-feeding stations around the park. Just being outdoors in nature is so therapeutic for one's soul! I've also had the chance to meet and work with wonderful folks from all walks of life who volunteer here as well.

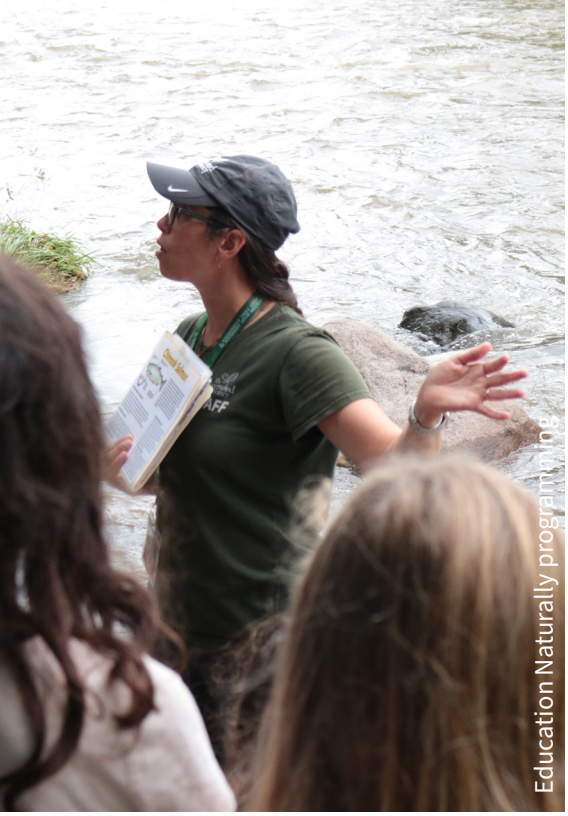
Volunteering with The Riverwood Conservancy has given me a chance to reinforce my love of nature, learn new things from the knowledgeable staff and experienced volunteers, and appreciate the tremendous amount of work involved to maintain the park. With the challenges of climate change, and the degradation of the environment due to pollution, it is more imperative than ever that we maintain green spaces like Riverwood to be resilient so they can continue to thrive and flourish for generations to come.



Therapeutic horticulture programming



Camp Riverwood programming



Education Naturally programming

> **Your thoughtful attention to meeting the students where they're at and providing opportunities for them to engage in the learning was greatly appreciated. I would highly recommend this program to other schools and groups.**
>
> **Leanne Swayze**
> **Grade 4-5 Teacher, Brookmede Public School**



Siri Chakrika Puligoru *is a Grade 11 Student at Stephen Lewis Secondary School. She worked with The Riverwood Conservancy as a co-op placement, spending much of her time involved in our education programs. Siri tells us how her time here impacted her.*

Since moving to Canada, I haven't really had the chance to connect with nature much. My placement at The Riverwood Conservancy changed that by giving me plenty of opportunities to spend time outdoors. One of my favorite moments was during the "What in the World?" program, where we went on a hike. I really enjoyed helping the kids with their activities and just being out in nature.

Being surrounded by nature most of the time, I got to notice so many cool things, like the autumn leaves with all their colors, the different textures of plants, and even spotting unique fungi while hiking during programs.

It was so interesting to slow down and really observe everything to take it in. Being part of these activities has definitely helped me feel more connected to nature. It's even made me think about doing more outdoor stuff in the future, like hikes and camping trips with my family.

53
Camp Riverwood participants across March Break and summer months

6,554
Education Naturally participants

1,100
Therapeutic horticulture participants

The **Junior Naturalists Club** and **Mini Naturalist Club** (photos 1-3) continued to provide young nature-lovers with opportunities to explore Riverwood and other local green spaces where they learned about wildlife, plant life, and fossils, and gave back to the environment through service projects that involved picking up litter and removing invasive species. Well done, young naturalists!


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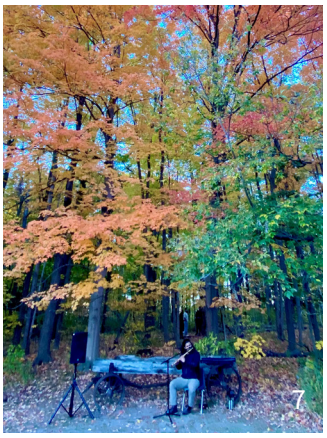

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In October, we hosted the inaugural edition of **The Great Riverwood Hike** (photos 4-7), a new peer-to-peer fundraising event. We were thrilled to see our community come out to support our programs while enjoying a magical sunset stroll around the park, complete with activities at our partners' booths, refreshments, and some fantastic flute music that further enhanced the radiant fall colours. The event raised over $25,000 for The Riverwood Conservancy's programs. Our sincere thanks to all of the participants, sponsors, volunteers, and donors who made the event a success!



The Red Bear Singers drum and sing at Jingtamok: The Riverwood Indigenous Social

When deciding which organization would receive our inaugural Spirit of Reconciliation Award, The Riverwood Conservancy was our first thought because of their commitment to holding space for Indigenous people in Mississauga and Peel Region, along with their dedication to environmental stewardship. The Riverwood Conservancy has supported The Indigenous Network for years by providing a beautiful space for growth, knowledge sharing, connection, and healing, furthering reconciliation in our community.

Dana Commandant
Programs Manager, The Indigenous Network

2024 Awards

The Indigenous Network — Spirit of Reconciliation Award

MBOT Mississauga Board of Trade — Not-for-Profit of the Year Award

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 303,433	473,163
Short-term investments	50,000	100,000
Accounts receivable	22,772	11,497
Harmonized sales tax receivable	6,499	9,320
Prepaid expenses	20,426	9,326
	403,130	603,306
Capital assets	13,532	15,588
	$ 416,662	618,894
Liabilities and net assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$ 65,509	78,806
Deferred contributions – operating	63,502	102,944
Deferred contributions – capital	6,487	5,706
	135,498	187,456
Net assets		
Operating Reserve	274,119	421,556
Capital Asset Reserve	7,045	9,882
	281,164	431,438
	$ 416,662	618,894

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended December 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Operating Reserve		
Balance, beginning of year	$ 421,556	509,923
Excess of expenditures over revenues	(147,437)	(88,367)
Balance, end of year	$ 274,119	$ 421,556
Capital Asset Reserve		
Balance, beginning of year	$ 9,882	$ 15,330
Excess of expenditures over revenues for year	(2,837)	(5,448)
Balance, end of year	$ 7,045	9,882

Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2024

	Operating Reserve	Capital Asset Reserve	Total 2024	Total 2023
Revenues				
Grants	$ 696,117	3,697	699,814	745,209
Program fees	189,206	-	189,206	167,179
Donations	195,960	-	195,960	166,836
Events, fundraising, and sponsorships	96,125	-	96,125	73,723
Honoraria	12,250	-	12,250	8,246
Other revenue	23,037	-	23,037	26,577
	1,212,695	3,697	1,216,392	1,187,770
Expenditures				
Administration	116,688	-	116,688	103,023
Amortization	-	6,534	6,534	9,454
Communications and marketing	7,462	-	7,462	6,061
Fundraising	41,052	-	41,052	27,881
Program expenses	93,607	-	93,607	86,743
Purchased services	4,054	-	4,054	24,462
Salaries and wages	1,097,269	-	1,097,269	1,023,961
	1,360,132	6,534	1,366,666	1,281,585
Excess of expenditures over revenues	$ (147,437)	(2,837)	(150,274)	(93,815)

2024 Major Supporters

Guardians of Riverwood | $100,000+
City of Mississauga

Guardians of Riverwood | $25,000+
Employment and Social Development Canada
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Anonymous (1)

Sunshine Circle | $10,000+
Armstrong Milling Co Ltd
Beth Jones
Government of Canada Community Services Recovery Fund
Greater Toronto Airports Authority
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Hoffman-La Roche Ltd.
Novo Nordisk Chronic Disease Fund at the Mississauga Foundation
Pendle Fund at the Mississauga Foundation
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Scotts Canada Ltd
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Sherilyn Ketchen/RBC Wealth Management
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
The Frank Fowler Foundation
University of Toronto Mississauga Centre for Urban Environments
Weston Forest
Anonymous (2)

Pollinators' Circle | $5,000+
Annie Cordeiro Family Trust
Gordon & Patricia Gray Animal Welfare Foundation
Johansen Larsen Foundation
KPMG Foundation
Patricia M. Kluge
Patrick Kelly
Anonymous (1)

Gardeners' Circle | $1,000+
Alectra Utilities Corporation
Allegis Group Foundation
Arthur and Carol MacDonald
Aviva Canada
Brukar Inc.
Catherine Doehler
Cloverleaf Garden Club of Mississauga
Compass Datacenters
CRH Canada Group
Ellen McGregor and Paul Prno
Employees of Weston Forest
Gillian Lien-Robinson
Glenn Graydon Wright/GW Technologies Services Inc.
Gore Mutual Insurance
Granite REIT Holdings Limited Partnership
Hancock Van Alstyne Family Fund
Heather and David Shaw
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Lorraine Crow and James Giles Family Fund at the Mississauga Foundation
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Medtronic
Monarch Butterfly Eclipse Project
Nicole Clarkson and John Short
Patricia Rusciolelli
Peeter Poldre
Prophix Software Inc.
Rebecca Paddock
Reunion Coffee Roasters
Robin Haley-Gillin
Sage Foundation
Sara Wilbur-Collins and Peter Collins
Scott Funeral Home
Sheridan Nurseries Limited
Smart and Caring Children and Youth Grant at the Mississauga Foundation
Springbank Greenhouses
Stantec Consulting Ltd.
Suzanne Graham
Suzanne J. Roy
The Indigenous Network
The Riverwood Conservancy Endowment Fund at the Mississauga Foundation
Ulrich Krull
Urban Nature Store
Watson Gloves
Whole Foods Market - Square One
Winners Merchants International LP
Anonymous (1)

Riverwood Supporters | $500+
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Steve Hoscheit
Timothy Pickering
Zoltan Tompa

Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations who contributed in 2024!
For a list of additional donors, please visit **theriverwoodconservancy.org/supporters**.



Scarlet tanager

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As a result of volunteering, I became aware of specific program needs, and how hard the staff work with the funds available to them. I was happy to route my charitable giving to The Riverwood Conservancy. I've also made gifts in honour of past staff and volunteers to remember them and their excellent work. Giving makes me feel reassured, as I can see how my funds are put to good use!

Catherine Doehler
Volunteer and Donor

Many thanks to our Guardians of Riverwood and Sunshine Circle supporters

MISSISSAUGA

Employment and Social Development Canada
Canada

Ontario Trillium Foundation
Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario
An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

ARMSTRONG
Canada's Premier Bird Food

Beth Jones

Funded by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund
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HAZEL McCALLION FOUNDATION
for the Arts, Culture and Heritage

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Sherilyn Ketchen
RBC Wealth Management

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

The Frank Fowler Foundation

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA
Centre for Urban Environments

WESTON FOREST

@yourriverwood

You can bring our vision of a community that lives in harmony with nature to life. Make your gift today at **theriverwoodconservancy.org/donate** or email **info@theriverwoodconservancy.org** and let's talk about your giving plans.

The Riverwood Conservancy.org