

# Local tourism association wants to attract summer visitors

The Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association wants to help increase tourism for the area this summer.

Busy laying the groundwork for this year's summer travel season, the Hamilton Halton Brant RTA has developed a new partner website and workforce training initiatives, meant to help increase the number of visitors to the area throughout the year.

"According to recent research, consumers perceive Hamilton Halton Brant as a great place to experience nature through outdoor activities and also a great place to experience history and

Canadian heritage, and we have some exciting projects for 2013 that will create even more opportunities for visitors to come to our region to enjoy these types of pursuits," Maria Fortunato, executive director of the Hamilton Halton Brant RTA, said in a press release.

Current projects include: Voyage Into Paradise, an authentic paddling experience on the Grand River and through Cootes Paradise; and a new cycling route through Hamilton and Burlington.

There is a contest to name

the route, which residents can enter at [www.theheartofontario.com](http://www.theheartofontario.com).

An educational bursary program is also being developed to offer tuition support to area-tourism students and professionals, as well as a new training series focusing on customer service, marketing and packaging development, and e-marketing and social media — these sessions

will be offered between February and December.

The newly launched website, [www.hamilton-haltonbrant.com](http://www.hamilton-haltonbrant.com), will offer information about the latest tourism initiatives, an opportunity to get involved with training and marketing efforts, as well as a chance to sign up to receive regular updates on the industry.

## Waste-free schools recognized

The students at Our Lady of Peace and St. Andrew Catholic elementary schools have truly taken the concept of reduce, reuse and recycle to heart.

The schools have been recognized for their achievement during the annual Waste-Free Lunch Challenge, during Waste Reduction Week (Oct. 15-19). The two local schools were selected among only a few for producing the least amount of waste.

During the week, 509 participating students at Our Lady of Peace diverted 91 per cent of waste from the landfill, while at St. Andrew, 704 students diverted 95 per cent of waste. Both schools generated one gram per student per day.

The 400 participating schools diverted 11,300 kg of lunch material from entering the landfill — this is the equivalent of filling 500 blue boxes.

Schools sorted, weighed and recorded their lunchtime waste generation throughout the week, with the winners chosen from among the schools that diverted the most waste.

"The average recycling rate for residents across Ontario is 47 per cent," said Jo-Anne St. Godard, executive director of the Recycling Council of Ontario, which puts on the challenge. "The most successful schools diverted 100 per cent of their lunch waste from landfill... and that proves the rest of us can learn a lot from them."

The Waste-Free Lunch Challenge is an environmental education program that aims to support educators and students to reduce waste generated from school lunches. Since 2010, more than 350,000 Ontario children have participated in the program.

Learn more at visit [www.wastefreelunch.com](http://www.wastefreelunch.com).

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