

# RESIDENTS ABUZZ IN QUEST TO HELP BEES AND BUTTERFLIES

MELANIE HENNESSEY  
mhennessey@metroland.com

Pollinating insects are getting a little extra assistance these days from a dedicated group of Halton Hills volunteers.

The local residents are taking part in the David Suzuki Foundation's Butterflyway Project, a citizen-led movement that aims to grow gardens for pollinators throughout the country.

What started as a small program in five Canadian cities a few years ago with in-person training has expanded virtually during the pandemic to more than 100 communities, including Halton Hills.

"There has been a sharp decline in pollinator populations in recent years due to climate change, loss of habitat and widespread use of pesticides," explained Katherine Shaw, a Butterflyway ranger who heads up the program for Halton Hills. "Our goal is to create patches of pollinator-friendly habitat with the aim of stitching together neighbourhood-scale corridors for local butterflies, bees and beneficial bugs."

Shaw and her team of eight have been busy, with five public gardens currently enrolled in the program. The volunteers have planted 300-plus plants of 62 different native species in Norval's McNab Park.

"We've been busy weeding and watering the plants at McNab Park during this hot, dry summer, carting water from the nearby river to water the garden beds," said Shaw. "Our labours have paid off as we've watched the new plants grow and thrive. We have seen several insect species visiting our flowers, too."



Melanie Hennessey/Torstar  
Butterflyway Project members (from left) George Gastle, Katherine Shaw, Fiona Reid and Kathy Gastle in the pollinator-friendly garden they created at Norval's McNab Park.

New native pollinator gardens have also been created on the town hall property, while the Old Seed House Garden and Lucy Maud Montgomery Garden have added to their existing native pollinator plantings.

Willow Park Ecology Centre, which already had a butterfly garden, has joined the program as well.

The Butterfly Way Project promotes the use of native plants as they're already adapted to local conditions and don't require fertilizer or pesticides, and use much less water, explained Shaw.

"As well, some species of wildlife are completely dependent on specific native plants to survive," she added. "A good example of this is the monarch butterfly which uses only milkweed as its host plant."

On a smaller scale, dozens of local residents have become involved in the project by either starting pollinator gardens from scratch at their homes or adding to an existing garden. There are currently 43 private gardens registered in the Halton Hills area and counting.

While funding isn't provided through the pro-

gram, Shaw said two of the local members have extensive pollinator gardens and are happy to donate plants to others.

The Old Seed House Garden and Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club have also contributed financially to help purchase native plants for the McNab Park and Old Seed House gardens.

Shaw said she's been pleasantly surprised by people's enthusiasm for the project, which has grown beyond her expectations.

"I think it has given us something worthwhile to do and something positive to focus on during difficult times," she said. "Helping pollinators, while building a more eco-friendly community, has lifted each of us out of our individual lives and helped us come together to be part of something much bigger."

Next year, the local group hopes to expand the garden at McNab Park and also work with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority on native pollinator plantings in Hungry Hollow.

For more information or to enrol in the project locally, email butterflyway-project@gmail.com.

## ADOPT A PET



### ADOPTABLE PETS OF THE WEEK...

#### Big Red is Looking for a Home

BARB JOHNSON

Big Red's a senior looking for a quieter home.

NHKR does not have many foster families for older cats, we are an established kitten and mom rescue. But when an older cat has nowhere to go because Halton Hills does not have an Animal Shelter, we do our best to take them into foster care.

Big Red is looking for a home to spend his senior years, he is estimated to be 12 years old. He was abandoned on an unsuspecting homeowner's front step. Big Red obviously required medical help - he has lost weight, had his dental work done and he receives thyroid medication twice daily. His medication will cost about \$25.00 monthly and he eats limited amounts of canned and dry Pet Store food.

Big Red needs to continue losing weight to increase his mobility. He walks with a slight limp and does not jump up or climb. He is content to sit and look out windows or follow his foster family until he wants to nap, then he finds his comfy corner.

He enjoys being brushed, especially around his head. When he's had enough he gives a low growl and walks away. He does not bite and was previously declawed. Big Red is not loud but he does talk when he would like something. When people are



Big Red

submitted photo

sitting quietly he asks for some scratches.

Big Red doesn't mind friendly dogs and is passive with other cats. He would enjoy a quieter home with experienced cat people. He doesn't always like to take his medication and is an expert at spitting pills out. He has an engaging personality and NHKR is looking for a family that will appreciate him and continue to improve his enjoyment of life.

Big Red will be available for adoption this Sat. at Pet Valu 375 Mountainview Rd south from 10:00am -12:00 \$160. cash adoption, view [www.NHKR.ca](http://www.NHKR.ca) for other felines available and the Home Page for adoption details or call Barb 905-873-8547



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You can also go to our website and click on "Donate"

Browse our website for pictures and profiles of the kittens and cats available for adoption. [www.NHKR.ca](http://www.NHKR.ca)