

# Alberta Council for Environmental Education:

Giving youth the tools  
they need to create a  
sustainable future



**ACEE**

Alberta Council for  
Environmental Education

*The Alberta Council for Environmental Education (ACEE) works collaboratively to advance environmental education in Alberta—because educating today’s youth to be tomorrow’s environmental stewards is our best strategy to create a sustainable future.*





**I am thrilled** to lead the team at ACEE. Environmental education is so important: it allows us to get ahead of the environmental crisis by giving people the tools they need to create a sustainable future. Our work is preventative health care for the planet!

The work we do to advance environmental education in Alberta is superb. I've worked with a lot of non-profits, and ACEE is one of the highest-functioning organizations I've ever seen. Our entire board donates annually to our organization, and I invite you to help support this essential work.

Brad Clute  
Board Chair  
Alberta Council for Environmental Education

- ❖ ACEE is an award-winning leader and trusted charity for investing in Alberta's environmental literacy and stewardship.
- ❖ ACEE recognizes the strategic importance of advancing environmental education in lockstep with energy education and climate change education.
- ❖ Founded in 2005, ACEE is a non-profit with charitable status.
- ❖ Our dedicated staff team brings over 80 years of experience.
- ❖ Since inception, ACEE has worked with over 250 partners including school boards, schools, lead teachers, agencies, and government to engage Alberta youth in environmental, energy, and climate change education.
- ❖ Our diverse funding base includes corporations, small businesses, foundations, and individuals.

# We need environmental education!

*Albertans are growing increasingly concerned about our impact on the natural systems that sustain us. Meanwhile, children and adults alike suffer from Nature Deficit Disorder, spending more time in front of screens and less time outdoors – a disconnect from the natural world that threatens our well-being. Our polling tells us that many youths are discouraged by environmental problems, and lack the skills and motivation to tackle them – and corporate employers point to the workforce’s lack of understanding of sustainable development concepts, emerging clean technologies, etc. To create a sustainable future we need more environmental, energy, and climate education.*



*"We will protect only what we love. We need to find ways to reconnect our children with nature."*

*"The final exam for being human is to live sustainably with the environment – but so far, we are failing more of the quizzes than we are passing."*

—excerpts from interview transcripts with Alberta opinion leaders





## Youth want to learn how to create a sustainable future

We have a great opportunity in Alberta: almost one quarter of our population is under 19 years old. And, like Bailey (pictured here), they want to learn. We must equip them with the tools to deal with the complex environmental issues they'll inherit.

ACEE has made significant progress in its work to advance environmental education in Alberta – but we are not there yet. We need to move environmental education from the margins into the education mainstream.

### *Will you help give youth the tools they need?*

As a charitable organization, ACEE relies on donations. We invite you to support our work, inspiring youth to realize their potential and become stewards of the environment. Now, more than ever, we need to give youth the tools they need to create a sustainable future.

Secure online donations can be made at: [www.abcee.org/donate](http://www.abcee.org/donate).



*"When it comes to climate change, students in Alberta aren't given the tools they need to combat this global challenge. The school system isn't providing those skills."*

—Patrick Duke, graduated in 2015 after twelve years of public school education in Alberta

*"Most students in our schools look like a deer in the headlights when you ask them to think through complex environmental issues, or articulate solutions to those issues."*

—Aaron Dublenko, Teacher, Edmonton Public School Board

*"Without environmental and energy literacy, you can't have meaningful dialogue about most Albertan issues."*

—Gordon Lambert, Collaboration For Sustainability Inc., and former VP Sustainability, Suncor

**I support ACEE** because they are really good at what they do. This organization is smart and strategic, applying systems thinking to create change, whether that is helping create a new education curriculum or building and leveraging strong relationships with education leaders, government, and corporations. I love that ACEE keeps its eye on the prize, putting our children first in the work to get them outdoors and to advance their environmental, energy, and climate literacy.

ACEE has helped Alberta vault to first place in the country when it comes to environmental education. They are a lean and efficient group that knows how to stretch funder dollars for maximum effect. I usually stay quiet about organizations that deserve support; but ACEE offers so much potential for our children's education that I feel compelled to offer this public note of endorsement.

*I encourage others to join me in supporting their crucially important work!*

Peter Poole  
Owner, Juniper Hotel, Banff



*"Suncor invests in initiatives that build skills and knowledge, inspire innovation, and actively engage communities in collaborating for our energy future. We've made several grants to the Alberta Council for Environmental Education, and have found them to be an excellent investment."*

—Lori Hewson, Director of Community Investment and Social Innovation, Suncor Energy Foundation

# Want to advance environmental education in Alberta?

## *Support the Alberta Council for Environmental Education*

Winner of the prestigious Emerald Award for Public Education and Outreach, ACEE is the trusted charity for investing in Alberta's environmental literacy and stewardship.

By collaborating with teachers, agencies, parents, and students, ACEE helps youth appreciate and understand the environment, consider environmental issues, and act to create a sustainable future.

When we empower youth to act, we give them the gift of hope.

To move environmental education from the margins to the education mainstream ACEE works at many levels to:

- ❖ Increase students' environmental literacy
- ❖ Harness youth voice to guide decision makers
- ❖ Build strong networks of collaborative stakeholders

ACEE works with our partners to:

- ❖ champion environmental education
- ❖ convene education leaders and policy makers in strategic conversations
- ❖ ignite and coordinate leadership
- ❖ connect the community through collaborative networks
- ❖ develop partnerships and programs to build capacity



Kathy Worobec, Gareth Thomson, and Tanya Doran accept ACEE's Emerald Award

*"Thanks to ACEE for over a decade of support and leadership! Your work has been incredibly valuable to help us collaborate, learn from each other, and to advance environmental education."*

—Judy Archer,  
former Manager of Community Education, Calgary Zoo

*"Through ACEE's program, students are learning about energy, environment, and their local community - and applying what they're learning to the real world. It's raising their learning to another level. In Pincher Creek, we have engaged the full spectrum of education between preschool and post-secondary!"*

—John Taylor, Teacher, Livingstone Range School Division

*"ACEE is a cornerstone for all environmental educators in Alberta."*

—Nathalie Stanley Olson, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Battle River Watershed

*"The recommendation of the solar panels actually came from students themselves with the work that the Alberta Council for Environmental Education has been doing."*

—David Eggen, Alberta Minister of Education,  
in his 2016 announcement of \$9M funding  
for solar panels on new schools



*"My experience with ACEE has been rewarding and empowering. I am continually impressed with your professionalism and warmth as you deliver all your programs. My team was amazed when they realized that ACEE has only four staff!"*

—Lisa Vandendool, Teacher,  
Vera M. Welsh Elementary School







# ACEE's impact

## Since 2005, we've 'moved the needle' when it comes to advancing environmental education:

### Increasing students' environmental literacy

- ❖ reached over 10,000 students through Alberta Green Schools, creating a school-wide culture of environmental stewardship and energy literacy
- ❖ connected thousands of preschool children with nature, promoting unstructured outdoor play during our annual Get Outside and Play Week
- ❖ convened over 5,000 teachers in annual environmental education conferences, in partnership with provincial/national organizations, Alberta Teachers Association, and school boards
- ❖ presented well over a hundred sessions at teachers' conventions and conferences
- ❖ supported the learning of hundreds of thousands of students by connecting tens of thousands of teachers to quality environmental learning resources

### Harnessing youth voice to guide decision makers

- ❖ engaged Alberta youth to create "How Alberta Schools should show Climate Leadership", a set of recommendations capturing the knowledge and passion of 3,000 students that youth still promote to government leaders

### Bringing environmental education into new K-12 curriculum

- ❖ convened a multi-stakeholder Education Task Force to create 'Curriculum for a Sustainable Future,' proposing content for new Alberta K-12 curriculum to increase 700,000 students' environmental, energy, and climate literacy

### Building strong networks of collaborative stakeholders

- ❖ helped 75 education teams from schools, NGOs, and municipalities build their capacity and advance their work through a multi-day annual leadership clinic retreat
- ❖ supported many thousands of educators through our monthly newsletter and online resource database for up to date and useful activities and events
- ❖ organized over a hundred workshops and meetings to help agency professionals acquire resources, share ideas, and develop collaborative plans
- ❖ created the Get Outside and Play Network, engaging nearly 800 early childhood professionals in collaborative learning and action
- ❖ conducted robust provincial polling of Albertans' environmental literacy to inform the work of our community, surveying 801 adults and 459 youth



# ACEE's programs: Proven solutions you can support, to give youth the tools they need

## Bringing Environmental Education into the mainstream

The next few years will see new K – 12 curriculum in all core subject areas in Alberta – and we are at the table with Alberta Education and their partners, leveraging almost a decade of engagement and relationship to ensure our proposed [Curriculum for a Sustainable Future](#) is adopted.

Alberta school boards spend more than \$7 billion annually – we work to [galvanize Alberta's Educational Leadership](#) of school board trustees, superintendents, etc., encouraging and supporting them as they 'take the next step' towards environmental sustainability.

We create a [public narrative around the value of environmental education](#), using public events and diverse communication channels (opinion editorials, monthly newsletters, social media) to shine a light on inspiring stories – and encourage others to make their own contributions.

## Increasing children's environmental literacy

Through [Alberta Green Schools](#) we partner with school divisions, providing them with learning resources and planning time, helping them create a school-wide culture of energy literacy and environmental stewardship.

Our [Energy Efficiency Education program](#) helps students increase their energy and environmental literacy as they leverage new technology that 'makes energy visible.' Students monitor energy use in real time – then take steps to conserve energy.

[We support teachers](#) by connecting them with quality learning opportunities and teaching materials, working with the teacher professional learning network, bringing in community experts and resources, and enriching teachers' conventions through presentations by our staff and other agencies.

[Appreciation of nature.](#) We agree with David Sobel: "If we want children to flourish and become truly empowered, allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it." We encourage parents and teachers to take their children outdoors so that preschool and school age children have a chance to receive the gifts that nature provides.

*"When it comes to climate change, the antidote to despair is action."*

—Leah Buchanan, student at Queen Elizabeth High School, and former Chair of ACEE's Alberta Climate Leadership Youth Network



## Harnessing youth voice and youth energy

ACEE supports [youth voice to guide decision-makers](#), helping high school students learn about and discuss issues they are passionate about, and then bringing their powerful youth voice to decision makers: Education and Environment Ministers, school board trustees and superintendents, etc.

We also [connect university students](#) to younger students in K-12 schools to inspire them with their passion, give them incentive to pursue their interests in university, and encourage them to take positive environmental action.

## Building strong networks of collaborative stakeholders

We [organize conferences and support networks](#) to convene teachers and other stakeholders, in partnership with other associations or school divisions.

We create [capacity building workshops and networks](#) for agencies that deliver environmental education, helping them develop partnerships and find synergies.

We maintain and promote our [online resource center](#), to support collaborative work and provide teachers with quality environmental education materials, presentations, and student learning opportunities.

*One page summaries that elaborate on these programs are available upon request.*

## Will you help us get the job done?

Now, more than ever, we need to give youth the tools they need to create a sustainable future.

ACEE offers many options for making your donation: one time gift, monthly donation, estate planning, gifts of securities, and corporate sponsorships.

Secure online donations can be made at: [www.abcee.org/donate](http://www.abcee.org/donate).



As a charitable organization, ACEE relies on donations to advance environmental education in Alberta.



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