



YER helps vulnerable youth build healthy community relationships with the human and natural worlds.

The Youth and Ecological Restoration Program, created by Wendy Kotilla in 2004, is based on her own youth experiences being surrounded by the healing powers of nature. YER provides youth with work experience, ecotherapy and support.



YOUTH & ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM

TRANSFORMING YOUTH FROM LEARNERS TO LEADERS

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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FUNDERS

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- Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island
- Vancouver Foundation
- Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Unifor Local 3019



YOUTH & ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM

Youth restoring local watersheds with community members to gain a sense of worth, belonging and place

PROGRAM DETAILS

The Youth and Ecological Restoration Program provides vulnerable youth aged twelve to eighteen with one-on-one work experience through ecological restoration methods, ecotherapy practices and mentoring support. Through each of the program phases, youth learn social, personal and communication skills that will support them in becoming confident, respectful and productive members of our society.

The program includes worksite transportation, a homemade lunch, all work tools and wet weather gear.

YERI:

Youth participants are involved with restoring local watersheds and ecosystems. They work with and receive mentoring from environmental organizations and volunteers. On program completion, youth give an oral presentation for a community group.



YERII:

Participants advance their learning of ecological research techniques. The YER coordinator and an environmental professional will collaborate with two YERI graduates to instill teamwork principles. The youth co-facilitate a public tour to end the project.

YERIII:

During this program phase, the youth will expand their educational responsibility. After training about a restoration project with a local group, they involve and instruct younger children. This results in them becoming teachers and mentors.

On conclusion of YERI, YERII and YERIII youth receive a certificate, letter of reference, honourarium and other rewards.

PROGRAM GOALS

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

"This program helped me to be a citizen, helped me to work with the community. It was a good experience for me. I loved helping the community and it's something I'll never forget. I hope I can give the knowledge to other people."

GAINING VALUED WORK EXPERIENCE

"Skills and experience I gained that can add to my job resume are: teamwork, communication skills, knowing that I will do the best I can no matter how hard it is going to be and not giving up."

IMPROVING ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

"Trees depend on the fish and the fish depend on the trees. It's all a circle, an ecosystem. Fish help the trees with nutrients, the trees grow big and it helps the fish because they give them shade and it keeps the water from heating up."

INCREASING PERSONAL & SOCIAL SKILLS

"I found this experience rewarding in the sense that I feel I have been helpful and gained confidence and also can do anything I set my mind to. I feel like a leader in my community."

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

"I think that it is something you feel good about because you are giving back to your community. The presentation gives you confidence because when a group of people respond in a positive way it gives you courage and confidence."

