

Projects from 2008

Organization: Green Venture (Hamilton, Ontario)
YCW Job Title: Historical/Horticultural Interpreter

Green Venture is a non-profit organization committed to helping Hamilton-Wentworth residents live more sustainably in their homes and at work. Their EcoHouse is an environmental education demonstration building and an exceptional example of why the greenest building can be the one that already exists. Constructed in 1850 as a manor house with a large property, today the EcoHouse remains on a two-acre lot surrounded by subdivisions. Green Venture has maintained the embodied energy of the historic building, added retrofits and adopted sustainable practices, including green roofs, solar panels, rain gardens and barrels, community and heritage gardens and much more.



Jeanie Quenneville, a YCW student, has spent the summer working at the EcoHouse as a Historical and Horticultural Interpreter. Her tasks have involved researching and restoring elements of the historic gardens, leading tours of the gardens and EcoHouse and updating marketing material. Jeanie is an English major at Wilfrid Laurier University. She reports that her time working at Green Venture has been an invaluable learning experience: “I came from working in a retail store—this job is so much more than ringing in a purchase. You get to learn, give out ideas and have them heard. You get to create something and feel like you own it. It’s a stepping stone to a career.”



In turn, Michael Gemmell of Green Venture emphasizes how important Jeanie’s contribution has been in advancing the EcoHouse project: “The YCW funding is a real bonus for us—it allows us to offer daily guided tours of the EcoHouse. Without Jeanie we would not be able to restore the heritage garden. Her background and interest in history is a big asset.”

For more information about Green Venture and its EcoHouse:
<http://ecohouse.greenventure.ca/>

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Organization: Lang Pioneer Village Museum (Keene, Ontario)
YCW Job Title: Historical Interpreter

Lang Pioneer Village in Peterborough County is an “outdoor museum” that consists of over 20 restored buildings constructed between 1800 and 1900, including a fully operational grist mill



where whole wheat is ground into flour. The buildings and artefacts that make up the village were moved from the surrounding townships in 1967—some from a distance of 145km. Today, visitors to Lang can experience a glimpse into Peterborough County’s agricultural heritage. Historical interpreters of all ages dressed in authentic historical costumes go about their daily chores and traditional trades while visitors look on.

Visitors to the Keene hotel are greeted by the smell of fresh baking and the smiling face of Paige Hickey, a Historical Interpreter ready to lead informative tours of the hotel and adjoining garden that would have provided the produce for meal preparation. Paige is a YCW student whose historical expertise reveals the challenges of heating, cleaning and running a 19th century rural hotel.

Paige is working on a master’s degree in history at Carleton University, and has really enjoyed the opportunity of working in a job related to her field of study: “In the past I’ve worked at a clothing store, a pharmacy, and a bakery. I’ve volunteered at Lang as an interpreter for about five or six years. This is where I wanted to be this summer. I love it here; it’s a great experience and I would really like to come back next summer.”



Joe Corrigan, Manager of Lang Pioneer Village, said that the YCW funding has been essential for its summer programs: “Lang has 20 historic buildings and we had 20,000 visitors through the village last year. We offer living history to our visitors and can’t do that without people working here as costumed historical interpreters. We receive some funding through the County, but those funds are mainly used to maintain the buildings. Getting funding through YCW and other grants is key to being able to hire students to run our summer programs.

We’ll never be completely self-sufficient—grants help keep us viable.”

For more information about Lang Pioneer Village Museum:
<http://www.langpioneervillage.ca/about.php>

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Organization: Markham Museum (Markham, Ontario)
YCW Job Title: Curatorial Exhibit Assistant

Markham Museum is a 25-acre historical village, containing nearly 30 buildings, structures and exhibits, including Regency and Victorian homes, a Baptist Church, a Log Cabin, a Train Station, a Saw Mill and much more. This community heritage site has been in operation for



over 35 years and is situated in the heart of downtown Markham, across the street from a shopping centre.

Having taken on the role of Curatorial Exhibit Assistant, YCW student Andrew George has become an important asset to the Museum. This summer he's worked on three exhibits: the Honey House, the Strickler Barn and the Print Shop. Andrew has worked with staff members in the Educational Department to develop a hands-on exhibit space in the Strickler Barn for visiting students. The work has involved site research and coordinating the design and installation of full exhibits, from painting to handling all the artefacts.

When asked to describe the work he's doing Andrew said, "I'm basically given an empty building and the 'big picture' of what my supervisors want to achieve. Then I put together exhibits to tell a story about the building. I come up with a plan and implement it using the artefacts. This is where my creative and artistic side takes over." Andrew is currently studying Art History at Concordia University and has really enjoyed the opportunity to work in a job that allows him to be creative and work in his field: "I used to work for a large home improvement retailer and if I hadn't got this job I'd probably still be there. I love this job!"



Andrew's project supervisor, Rachael Ancheril, said that it "would be really difficult to fill our summer positions without help from Young Canada Works. For instance, we're down one maintenance person this summer and this has had a big impact on us. We're really fortunate to have been approved for a YCW position this year."

For more information about Markham Museum:

<http://www.markham.ca/Markham/Attractions/Museum/>

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Organization: Mississauga Heritage Foundation (Mississauga, Ontario)
YCW Job Title: Resource Center Assistant

The Mississauga Heritage Foundation was founded in 1960 as a non-profit organization with a mandate to provide the community with a comprehensive Heritage Resource Center and to promote Mississauga's history. The Foundation operates out of "The Grange" or Robinson-Adamson house, a historic building constructed in 1828 and restored from 1979-1981. During the restoration the exterior brick was removed and today the house stands with all its original exterior detailing.



Sharifa Khan, a YCW student, has taken on the position of Resource Center Assistant which involves organizing and cataloguing the Foundation's library. In addition, she has taken on work writing articles, including an article on Sir John Beverley Robinson, the first Chief Justice of Canada for whom the house was built. Sharifa spoke with great enthusiasm about her position: "When I first saw the job description I knew I really wanted the job. I had worked in the past at a summer camp and was about to start there again, but I really wanted to start a more 'academic' job related to history. The learning experience is way up there."



Matthew Wilkinson, a historian at the Foundation, explained how important YCW funding is for their work: "We have a small staff and rely a great deal on outside funding to hire summer students. Sharifa has been invaluable to me in the Resource Centre. Our database was lost and all the work of organizing a new one had to be redone. Having an extra staff body here has helped us get the library organized."

For more information about the Mississauga Heritage

Foundation: <http://www.heritagemississauga.com/>