

Bee Canada Renewal Application

Valley Park Middle School
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Toronto Ontario
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416 396 2465

B) Applicant Information:

Name: Raj Puri Position: Grade 8/ Science Teacher
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Bee City Working Group

Eco Club teachers and Bee Valley Park

Mr. Puri	Eco Club Advisor/ Teacher
Mr. Baetz	Eco Club Advisor/ Teacher
Mr. Haley	Eco Club Advisor/ Teacher
Ms. Anne Marie Stephen	Caretaker

Nuha Khan	Grade 8 Student team member
Zoya Fatima	Grade 8 Student team member
Zunaira Yaqoob	Grade 8 Student team member
Muhammad Chauhdary	Grade 8 Student team member
Ehan Irfan	Grade 8 Student team member

1. Briefly summarize your Bee City experience. Please include information about community feedback, challenges and media responses.

Over the past few years, our school went through a massive yard revitalization. One of the key components was the creation of the wetland at the back of the school. Our school diverts all the rainwater that collects on the roof and channels it through a bioswale to our wetlands. This wetland has a holding tank that stores the rainwater. This water is used to irrigate the school field during dry periods. Funds given were used for

- purchase of native pollinating plants from The Brickworks
- hire a landscape designer to expand our gardens
mushroom compost

Native pollinating plants were planted in our school wetlands. Our school was actively involved in saving the bees last year. Not only did we plant flowers to attract, and give food to the bees, we raised awareness about endangered bees and held a bake sale in hopes of raising more

money to save the bees. In the bake sale, we raised over 200 dollars for the purchase of plants and gardening equipment.

We also made a community garden and planted herbs, and native flowers. The bees were attracted to the flowers and pollinated the plants as well. Classes came to the back of the school to pull out dog-strangling vines that are an invading species and harmful to Monarch Butterflies.

2. Please tell us about your experiences with the Pollinator Working Group.

We have a very hard working and co-operating Pollinator Working Group which takes initiative to help pollinating bees. Our facilitators are Mr. R. Puri, Mr. J.D Baetz, Mr. T. Haley. Our group members are Nuha Khan, Zoya Fatima, Zunaira Yaqoob and Muhammad Chauhdary. These four students work very co-operatively and our facilitators help them when needed. They try their best to carry out motives responsibly and effectively. We have achieved some goals already and are working to obtain more success throughout the year. As previously noted, we have started by visiting the Toronto Brickworks and buying native plants. We planted those plants and plan on making and placing seed balls throughout the wetlands near our school. With support from bee city canada we will be able to reach our potential and do more activities.

3. Please tell us about your community's efforts to reduce the use of pesticides.

The student body of our school was made aware of the negative effects of pesticides through morning announcements and a poster contest. Wildflower honey was given to the winners of the contest. Also, the many field trips we have done has taught us many effects of pesticides. Our eco team at school has been promoting awareness and we plan on reaching out to the managements of the buildings in our community. We can convince them to reduce pesticide use in the building lawns and gardens to promote sustainable tending to the land there. By doing this we can also reach out to our city employees and teach them about the us and the effects of pesticides on pollinators. By your funding our motive is to bring guest speakers such as Master beekeepers, Frank Mortimer, Pat Bano, and Kyle Maio who can talk in depth about the negative use of pesticides.

4. Please tell us about community initiatives focusing on habitat creation and restoration. If possible, include a plant list.

Valley Park wants to take action as a school to protect pollinators. Without bees, we will have to say goodbye to almonds, apples, zucchini, strawberries etc. Educating the community and the students and staff of Valley Park about how bees aren't harmful insects but that they are a significant part of nature and our daily diet is very important but it won't be enough to save the bees. Taking action is a much better way to save the pollinators. As St. John Chrysostom once said "The bee is more honoured than other animals, not because it labours, but because it labours for others" and we can't agree more. To save the bees and thank them for their labour, Valley Park and the community that surrounds it intends to purchase and plant plants in our schools' wetland to not only raise awareness and encourage people to promote and create sustainable habitats for species like the bees but also to attract insects such as the bees. This will increase the population of bees but it will also allow further education to the students about this important species. Some of the plants we continue to or intend to plant are:

- Black-eyed Susan
- Goldenrod
- Wild bergamot
- Common yarrow
- Milkweed
- Mock Orange
- Blanket Flower
- Blue Columbine
- Coneflower
- Beebalm
- Swamp Rose
- Canadian Bloodroot

5. Please tell us about your efforts aimed at educating the community, including residents, city employees, contractors, children and other groups.

Students shared their information that they received through our poster contest, announcements, and our bee kahoot to their parents. While running these initiatives we had chances to learn about the causes of issues to bees and solutions for what is happening. We shared what we learned with our teachers and students by cooperating with student council and setting up activities to encourage learning about pollinators. As listed, our work has brought change to the school and now we aim for bigger change. By talking to building management we will accomplish more and as well reach out to city employees. We can also visit the feeder schools in our area and do a learning session to change the mindset of children about bees and help them learn about this topic as well.

6. Please tell us about your community's participation in International Pollinator Week celebrations and other events. Include photos, web links, stories, media pieces and posters which can be shared through our website and social media networks.

We planted wildflowers plants at Tommy Thompson Park at the beginning of the year and we learned about the invading species of plants and animals. We learned how our species of pollinators are endangered and how we can help by planting wildflowers. We built bird nests to help the birds survive harsh seasons. We are planning to talk to building management and by doing that we can aim at the city employees

7. Tell us how your Municipality/First Nation promoted being a Bee City.

The city of Toronto is taking a lead in the fight to save our bees and bee populations. We, at the school level have created various posters in our school, about bees and how they are endangered in our society. We have educated our school, with announcements and our school even did a kahoot to educate our school Valley Park about bees. There are many schools in Toronto that have clubs mainly for the environment and are focused on how we can help the environment with various activities to help the bees. In Toronto, citizens are being educated, and now through the beekeeping seasons beekeepers take the extra step, to reduce the use of harmful sprays or fertilizers that could kill bees, and the citizens of Toronto can help, by planting flowers, so bees can pollinate more and create more plants for our human

consumption, and for the sake of saving the bees. We can plant more pollinator gardens in Toronto, which is a great solution to the problem of bees, and them being endangered.

8. What are your plans for the coming year? Please attach any documents outlining plans for habitat restoration or new habitat creation, pesticide reduction, demonstration gardens, community education initiatives and celebrations.

This year, our team of diligent eco team members are aiming to achieve many new goals in terms of work for helping bees and pollinators. Along with our student population and willing teachers, we aim to work endlessly and make changes in the community around us. At our school, we have an eco team and student council who work together to support these goals.

This year we aim to:

- Build bee boxes
- Eliminate dog-strangling vines in the area around our school
- Make seed balls out of wildflower seeds and place them throughout our wetlands
- Expand the wildflower gardens
- Have initiatives such as poster contests, Kahoots, and announcements to inform the school about bees and pollinators
- Work with student council leaders to talk to classes about what dangers bees are being put through, how to help, etc
- Making birdhouses to create an environmentally friendly space - when birds have a safe place to dwell their numbers stay strong

Put the six priorities of the pollinator protection strategy to use:

- create and enhance habitat
- design and connect green spaces
- partner and build relationships
- invest, incentivise and inspire
- celebrate and recognize achievements

We have identified areas that need to be enhanced and will use our resources to fix them. Our team visited Tommy Thompson Park and learned about bees, birds and other animals that live in the area. This helped us see what the habitats are composed of and what we can do to recreate that in the city. Our aspirations consist of awareness for student and teachers as well as building management. We will reduce the use of water and are working towards limiting use of plastic at school. There is also much focus on the three R's. Pollinator friendly plants were chosen and they will be planted so bees have a safe abode. With the help of our community and bee city Canada, we plan to work towards every initiative listed.

9. How can Bee City Canada help to facilitate your vision of a community which supports pollinators?

Bee City Canada is key for help in achieving our goals to help pollinators. Bee city has informed us of different issues to work on as well as provided us with the opportunity to make a change. The funding will help us purchase the respective items for the causes and help facilitate our objectives. Suggestions and motives from the Bee city Canada foundation will help us in our motives and process. Feedback and ideas from the official organization itself will be helpful to our work, therefore we can participate in more incentives. The money will go to buying native plants and creating pollinator gardens as well as the equipment needed for it. Bee houses and seed balls also come into place with the funding. More initiatives would be allowed as we would have the resources to do so.

Members of our Eco Team plan on educating students at our feeder schools about the importance of bees. Other schools can be taught to take the eco-initiative, to do anything eco friendly with the bees, such as planting flowers, or reducing pesticides, or maybe not using cell phones in specific areas because the cell phone radiation affects how the bees pollinate or perform when collecting honey.

10. We welcome your comments and suggestions to help us improve Bee City Canada, our web site and other communications.

You can approach other schools in the TDSB to get them involved. Bee City Canada personnel can help continue to educate students from Valley Park Middle School directly in order that they may educate students in our feeder schools.

Our work: We have enhanced and expanded our school gardens and planted numerous bee pollinating plants in the wetlands behind our school and at Tommy Thompson Park



ECO Club Installing birdhouses in school gardens

Tommy Thompson park trip



Bee poster contest winner



Valley park school gardens



Submitted by: Raj Puri Date: January 10, 2019