



Waterloo collegiate institute students Graham Oldford, John Anderton, Daniel Chen and Laura Pinchen are spending their summer working for the Reduce the Juice program.

Local teens encouraging the public to 'reduce the juice' this summer

Greg MacDonald

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While most teens are spending their summer flipping burgers or mowing lawns, a group of students from Waterloo collegiate institute is getting the chance to make a real difference.

More than a dozen local teens are taking part in Reduce the Juice, a program aimed at educating the public about pollution and reducing automobile emissions.

The students will travel door-to-door in the catchment area for WCI and ask residents to take a survey about their personal car emissions.

They will then try and get people to pledge a reduction in emissions, either by carpooling or taking one vehicle-free trip a week, said Sabrina Martin, a team leader for Reduce the Juice.

"We're trying to get everyone to make a 10 per cent reduction," Martin said. That's a big goal, especially when the students are planning to survey more than 5,000 Waterloo residents.

Martin is hopeful that the team can get more than 2,000 pledges, which will have a major impact on the city's air, she said.

The program started a few years ago and has operated in smaller communities such as Shelbourne, Ont., and Orangeville, Ont.

The move to Waterloo this summer is a big step up for the program, Martin said.

"We were looking for a bigger demographic. Shelbourne and Orangeville just don't compare in terms of demographics or size," she said.

Reduce the Juice came to city council in the spring and received approval for the use of office space at city hall and a donation to its operating budget.

The program is also funded by the region and other levels of government.

The next step was to find students to employ for the summer. In early June, the team did interviews with WCI students.

Students from all grade levels and walks of life were chosen. The one thing they had in common was a passion for the environment, Martin said.

That passion comes directly from the education the students received at WCI, said Daniel Chen, a Reduce the Juice team member who just graduated from the secondary school.

"The school programs really push for kids to be more environmental," Chen said, citing efforts such as a proposed green roof as proof of the school's commitment to green endeavors.

The goal of the program is to show people that they can easily make a difference just by changing a few habits, Chen said.

"We're not telling people that they have to live in a grass hut," Chen said. "It's just about implementing different routines into your lifestyle."

Here some tips to reduce your emissions this summer:

Don't idle. Leaving your car running while you are stopped for long periods of time contributes to smog.

- Avoid drive-throughs.
- Change your oil every 5,000 kilometres. Not only will this help your car run better, but it will make your car run cleaner.
- Use an electric or push mower. Gas lawn mowers release harmful toxins into the air.
- Make sure you have optimal air pressure in your car tires. This will help improve fuel efficiency.
- Don't use your air conditioner when driving in the city. Roll your window down instead.

For more tips visit www.reducethejuice.ca.

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