

# OUR TRAIL TO WELLNESS

*For the Students and Employees of Lakehead University*



## IN THIS ISSUE

**9 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS**

**ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS**

**5 WAYS TO ENHANCE ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS**

**CENTRING ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS AT LAKEHEAD'S OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL SELF CARE**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

## Welcome Message

For several years now, Lakehead University has reinforced its commitment to sustainable development goals with the understanding that Environmental Wellness has a significant impact on the overall well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and the generations to come.

As an institution, we are all connected. Establishing a safe, welcoming, supportive, and sustainable environment is top of mind and crucial in our success as a community, as well as in the achievement of our personal endeavours. In particular, the environment we create for students, both inside and outside the classroom, is one of the most significant factors in developing long-term roots in our communities – a place in which they can call home.

I encourage you all to take advantage of the raw natural beauty that encompasses Thunder Bay and Orillia as we are truly fortunate to live, study, and work in our region. Enjoy a nice hike with family and friends, utilize our outdoor learning spaces, or watch the Northern skies in solitude. I encourage you all to lean into whatever instills a personal sense of peace as appreciation and gratitude will closely follow.

Let's continue to work together to find innovative and sustainable solutions for the betterment of the environment and our immediate surroundings.

**Dr. Andrew Dean, Vice President, Research Innovation**

## 9 Dimensions of Wellness



## 9 Dimensions of Wellness

Wellness is an active, lifelong process of becoming aware of your choices and making decisions that will help us to live a more balanced and fulfilling life. Everyone's optimal wellness is different with many factors influencing one's own health and well-being. To this end, [Lakehead University's Wellness Strategy](#) recognizes and considers nine (9) main dimensions of wellness as contributing factors to our overall health and well-being: Cultural, Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social and Spiritual.

## Wellness Dimension: Environmental Wellness

**Our Trail to Wellness** is built on the foundation of the 9 Dimensions of Wellness. This particular Issue features **Environmental Wellness**.

**Environmental Wellness:** Valuing and respecting the relationship between ourselves, the spaces we live and work in, and the planet.

Environmental Wellness includes, but is not limited to:

- Enjoying and appreciating the outdoors
- Supportive and nurturing home/work environments
- Sustainable development
- Community space for social activities and hobbies
- Fostering happy relationships in your home
- Sanitary and safe home/work/study space
- Appropriate waste management
- Energy Conservation
- Recycling



Photo Credit: Doug Diaczuk, tbnewswatch

# 5 Ways to Enhance Environmental Wellness

1



## Create a healthy, happy living space

Your home should feel like an oasis; a place that provides refuge, comfort, and joy. Take a moment to assess your living space and create an action plan to improve your surroundings. Cleaning up clutter, adding colour to your decor, hanging family and friend photos, or increasing light exposure are just a few simple ways to generate a healthy and happy living space.

2



## Find spaces of tranquility

Take a moment out of your busy day to pause and appreciate your surroundings. This will look different depending on the person, however, you may benefit from spending time in your favourite spot, being outdoors surrounded by nature, or taking a moment to look out the window. These spaces or moments of tranquillity should provide a sense of gratitude and peace.

3



## Make a positive impact on the environment

Understanding your connection to nature and your surroundings is an important aspect of Environmental Wellness. We all coexist while calling this beautiful planet our home. Utilizing reusable containers, gardening with organic substitutes, and bringing your own travel mug for coffee are just a few small gestures that positively impact the environment and our overall wellbeing.

4



## Make your community a better place

Finding ways to contribute to your community creates a sense of belonging, purpose, and pride. Any act of kindness, whether big or small, forms many positive health benefits to all parties involved. Volunteering, lending a hand to a neighbour, or participating in our Lakehead University Campus Beautification Days are just a few simple ways we can make our community a better place.

5

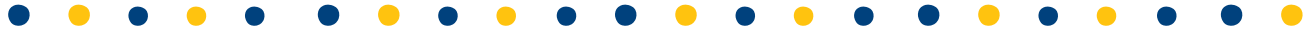


## Foster happy relationships in your home

Having somewhere safe to go at the end of a long work or school day allows you to unwind freely and comfortably. One important contributing factor is the relationships within this setting that greatly influence your Environmental Wellness. Living with roommates or family can be challenging at times. Treat personal belongings and common spaces with respect, and remain open-minded to new ideas and concepts to help foster a positive experience.



# Centring Environmental Wellness at Lakehead's Office of Sustainability



**Devon Lee**  
**Sustainability Coordinator, Office of Sustainability**

Environmental wellness is a multifaceted concept, much like sustainability. The two can be considered complementary and the work that the Office of Sustainability does here at Lakehead is in great part to promote environmental wellness in our students, staff, faculty, and community, but also in our operations and our physical environment. Lakehead is a world-recognized leader in implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and has been ranked in the Top 100 universities in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for the third year in a row (64th out of 1,406 universities in 2022—the highest of any university worldwide with under 10,000 students).

At Lakehead, we consider sustainability in a pluralistic and inclusive way that encompasses human and ecological health, social justice and equity, Indigenous rights, secure livelihoods, workplace wellbeing, and leadership for vibrant communities. With such an expansive view toward environmental wellness and sustainability at the university, we can't do it alone!

The Office of Sustainability works with a number of sustainability-focused councils, committees, and working groups to provide leadership and action on key priorities and with faculty, staff, student, and community champions to promote a culture of sustainability at the university guided by our [Sustainability Plan](#). Lakehead's Sustainability Plan covers four main facets of sustainability at the university: Academics, Operations, Engagement, and Planning and Administration. Environmental wellness is at the heart of each of these.

Through the Academics component of our Sustainability Plan, we aim to increase the integration of sustainability in our curriculum and extracurricular activities and in the innovative research being conducted across the university. Creating immersive, meaningful, and experiential opportunities for students to engage with sustainability topics and the ability to participate in and readily access sustainability research are all ongoing priorities of the Office of Sustainability and the university at-large.

For many people, environmental wellness and sustainability both bring to mind many of the operational aspects of the university. You may have noticed the new centralised sorting stations and informational signage for waste and recycling deployed throughout the Thunder Bay campus this semester in conjunction with our colleagues at Physical Plant. This program is but one of the aspects covered by Operations in our Sustainability Plan. In addition to waste, it includes grounds, dining services, energy, water, and transportation.

Other Operations highlights from the 2022/2023 academic year include the renewal of the [Bottled Water Policy](#) on our Orillia campus which prohibits the sale of disposable water bottles on campus, the implementation of [electric vehicle chargers](#) on our Thunder Bay campus, the [Cool Food Pledge](#) by our Thunder Bay dining services provider Aramark to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of our dining offerings by a minimum of 25% by 2030, and working with key stakeholders including the Sustainability Stewardship Council and regional partners at Confederation College's Net Zero Summit to consider how we transition to a zero-emissions future. We won't stop there though! We are working diligently to decrease the carbon footprint of our campus by exploring ways to bring a reusable container program to campus to reduce single-use plastics and working with our on-campus partners to find additional ways to support our university in choosing active and low-carbon commuting options.

Environmental wellness transpires when we are all working in lockstep to promote a culture of sustainability at the university—which is why engagement is a cornerstone of the Sustainability Plan. On campus, we collaborate with everyone from incoming first-year undergraduate students to university leadership and Lakehead's Board of Governors to foster environmental wellness at the university. This year the Office of Sustainability liaised with academic, executive, student, and community partners to participate in Canada's first-ever national Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week from March 6-10. At Lakehead alone, we helped to support 16 different events and initiatives across both campuses during SDG Week including a Climate Action Summit, seed-saving workshop, presentations and panel discussions on energy and water—we even made plant-based blender bike smoothies in conjunction with the [Lake Superior Living Labs Network](#) and the [Sustainable Food Systems Lab](#)!

In conjunction with student groups like [Engineers Without Borders Lakehead](#) and the [Lakehead University Sustainability Initiative](#) and community partners such as [EcoSuperior](#), the City of Thunder Bay, and the [Thunder Bay Repair Cafe](#), we held events such as e-waste drives, climate action film screenings, beeswax wrap-making, clothing swaps, the [citywide launch of waste reduction week](#), and a repair cafe where users brought in items in need of repair and were matched with skilled volunteers to assist with no-cost repairs. We also lent a hand to introducing two incredible new outdoor learning spaces to our Thunder Bay campus: the Climate Action Park located adjacent to Lake Tamblyn on the banks of the McIntyre River (watch for a welcoming ceremony this summer!) and the Wellness Path located off the multi-use path in the field between Oliver Road and the Bora Laskin Education Building. The Climate Action Park features a newly-expanded firepit area and aspects of the park work to promote habitat restoration for more-than-human residents of campus. At the Wellness Path, we've hosted labyrinth walks for students and information sessions for faculty on teaching and learning with the labyrinth. In addition, we offer sustainability campus tours year-round that take users on a guided walk of campus through a new lens!

And lastly, the planning and administration component of our Sustainability Plan guides all that we do here in the Office of Sustainability. Dr. David Barnett, Vice-President Academic and Provost, leads our Sustainability Executive Committee which oversees sustainability at the highest level here at the university. Likewise, Dr. Andrew Dean, Vice-President Research and Innovation, chairs our Sustainability Stewardship Council—the most inclusive and all-encompassing sustainability group on

campus comprised of students, staff, faculty, and community members from both campuses. Our Board of Governors continues to deepen their commitment to climate action through the Responsible Investment Policy and their completion of fossil fuel divestment from the Carbon Underground 200 in late 2022—ahead of schedule—and their leadership as a signatory to the [Investing to Address Climate Change Charter](#) which requires an annual reporting on the carbon intensity of our investments and the development of an action plan to reduce these.

It's clear that environmental wellness is an all-hands-on-deck situation here at Lakehead University. If you're not already involved, there are plenty of opportunities to do so whether through personal actions such as minimizing waste, choosing active transportation options, eating and cooking with plant-based food where possible, or participating in events with our office and our many partners. Two upcoming initiatives to watch for are the National Commuter Challenge from June 4-10 and our Campus Beautification Days where you can join peers and colleagues in lending a hand in keeping our outdoor spaces beautiful and accessible.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) or learn more about sustainability on campus by visiting our [website](#).



**Devon Lee**  
**Sustainability Coordinator, Office of Sustainability**



*Photo Credit: Doug Diaczuk, tbnewswatch*

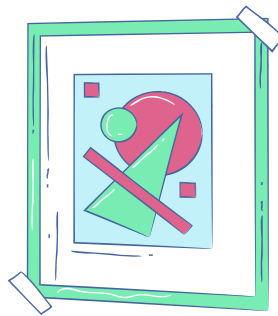
## Environmental Self Care Ideas



*Brighten up your work or study space with plants and greenery*



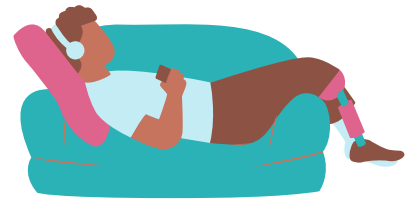
*Buy some colourful artwork and hang it on your walls*



*Air out your home by opening the windows for fresh air*



*Put Google Maps away and explore a new area*



*Listen to calming or upbeat music - whatever speaks to your mood or desired ambiance*

*Ditch the vehicle and choose active transportation one day per week*



*Create a meal plan to avoid excess food waste*

# Upcoming Environmentally Friendly Events

## 1 Tree Planting Volunteer (Half) Day - Orillia

Lakehead University Orillia is pleased to offer another community volunteering opportunity for our employees to enjoy. Participants will be heading outdoors for an afternoon of planting trees with the [Severn Sound Environmental Association \(SSEA\)](#). SSEA will be supplying the seedlings, loaning the buckets and shovels, and coordinating the planting, including providing a lesson on how to plant trees. This will be a fun afternoon of community building, spending time in the outdoors, and enjoying some camaraderie with our colleagues! For further details or to register, please reach out to **Kim Vallee** at [kavallee@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:kavallee@lakeheadu.ca).

Save the Date: May 10, 2023

## 2 Commuter Challenge - Orillia and Thunder Bay

The Active Commuter Challenge is a month-long event that coincides with National Environment Week which encourages friendly regional competition between local workplaces to experience different modes of active transportation. Participants commit to making at least one trip to work or school by walking, cycling, etc., AND tracking their commuting information on the TBDHU website, which can be found at: [tbayonthemove.ca](http://tbayonthemove.ca). Sign-up is available for both Lakehead University campuses.

Save the Date: June 2023

## 3 Campus Beautification Days - Thunder Bay

As part of [Lakehead University's Wellness Strategy](#), we are pleased to offer Campus Beautification Days: An opportunity for our community to come together to spruce up the campus, spend some time outdoors with peers and colleagues, and lend a helping hand. Activities include tidying up our gardens, collecting debris, and revitalizing our courtyards. We aim to create a clean and welcoming environment that instills a sense of pride in our physical surroundings. Lakehead employees, students, and alumni are welcome to attend.

Save the Date: June 13 - 15, 2023





## Available Resources: To Enhance Our Environmental Wellness

### Specific Tools Available for Students

- [TalkCampus](#)

TalkCampus is an online wellness peer support platform available to all students of Lakehead University. It is an anonymous online 24/7 mental health peer support network offering instant, ongoing global support at any time of the day or night. TalkCampus is a de-identified community where students share anonymously. In addition to connecting with peers, TalkCampus has trained volunteers and professionals available when needed. The combination of anonymity, 24/7 peer support, and access to trained professionals create a safe and welcoming environment which ultimately supports positive health. Visit the [Student Health and Wellness - Talk Campus](#) webpage to learn more!

- **Campus Maps**

- [Thunder Bay Campus](#) - Campus Map and Google Map
- [Thunder Bay Accessibility](#) - A map that depicts accessibility features available on campus
- [Campus Map of Sustainability Features \(Thunder Bay\)](#)
- [Orillia Campus](#) - Maps, Directions, Parking, and Tours

### Additional Environmental Wellness Resource for All



**Link:** [Turning Climate Anxiety into Action](#)

**Length:** 14 minutes

**Presenter:** Renée Lertzman

**Overview:**

It's normal to feel anxious or overwhelmed by climate change, says psychologist Renée Lertzman. Can we turn those feelings into something productive? In an affirming talk, Lertzman discusses the emotional effects of climate change and offers insights on how psychology can help us discover both the creativity and resilience needed to act on environmental issues.

## Introducing TalkLife Workplace: A New Wellness Resource for Lakehead University Employees

### About TalkLife Workplace

[TalkLife Workplace](#) is an online wellness peer support platform available to all employees of Lakehead University. It is an anonymous online 24/7 mental health peer support network offering instant, ongoing global support at any time of the day or night. TalkLife Workplace is a de-identified community where employees share anonymously. In addition to connecting with peers, TalkLife Workplace has trained volunteers and professionals available when needed. The combination of anonymity, 24/7 peer support, and access to trained professionals create a safe and welcoming environment which ultimately supports positive health.

### Why peer support?

Peer support relies on people using their own personal experiences to help each other and allows you to connect with like-minded individuals. It provides a sense of connection that is essential for our mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Beyond social connection, the benefits of peer support are wide-ranging and well-evidenced. You will also have access to:

- Journaling and Mood Tracking
- Wellbeing Library
- Clinical Self-directed Modules

TalkLife Workplace is accessed on a web platform via mobile, tablet, or desktop. **Employees can sign up using their Lakehead University email address.**

For more information, visit [talklifeworkplace.com](http://talklifeworkplace.com), or download the TalkLife Workplace app via [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#).

Click the image below for the How-To-Guide:





## Future Newsletters

If you are interested in contributing to our future newsletters, we would like to hear from you! Upcoming topics include:

- Cultural Wellness
- Emotional Wellness
- Financial Wellness

### For inquiries or submissions, please contact:

Christina Groulx (she/her)  
Wellness Strategy Coordinator  
Email: [wellnesscoordinator@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:wellnesscoordinator@lakeheadu.ca)

### Subscribing to our Newsletter

To subscribe to the *Our Trail to Wellness* newsletter, please [sign up here](#).



**“Each one of us matters, has a role to play, and makes a difference. Each one of us must take responsibility of our own lives, and above all, show respect and love for living things around us, especially each other.”**

**-- Jane Goodall**