

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**-For immediate release-**

### **Local Retailers and Grade 4 Class Plant for the Future**

**Toronto, ON – June 11, 2003** – Local environmental groups and small business owners helped to beautify a north Toronto retail strip today, with the help of a few small, but eager, helpers.

A Grade 4 class from West Preparatory Public School got their hands dirty helping to re-plant the planters found on the sidewalks on the north side of Eglinton Ave. W. (between Allen Rd. and Bathurst St.). With the help from local ecological gardeners at the North Toronto Green Community, they learned about the benefits of plants to the City's neighbourhoods.

The project is part of a joint program undertaken by the Upper Village Business Improvement Area (UVBIA) and Greenest City, a non-profit environmental organization. The program will determine the best strategies for "greening" the small retail sector. Promoting itself as "The Community that Cares", the UVBIA will partner with residents, local government and community organizations to yield economic, environmental and social benefits.

"Cleaning out the planters and helping to beautify the neighbourhood was the number one priority identified by residents and retailers alike," said Sheldon Kates, Chair of the UVBIA. "Helping to educate local students has been part of getting the community involved."

In a broader educational effort, volunteers will also be posting signage on all the planters so the community knows which plants are being used. This will also encourage greater civic pride and prevent the buildup of garbage in the planters.

Greenest City's program coordinator, Corey Diamond, sees bigger benefits. "The planting will help bring the community closer in line with our goals, but it's only the beginning. Throughout the summer, we will be working with businesses in the area to help them reduce their waste and energy use, in a bid to save money and bring positive attention to their stores. When the pilot study is complete, the Upper Village area will be the greenest retail strip in Canada."

Greenest City's Cool Shops program works with street-facing retailers in Toronto neighbourhoods to identify and implement in-store energy management measures to reduce energy use, save on utility costs, and improve environmental health. Greenest City is dedicated to building a clean, healthy and more liveable urban environment. The joint project is being funded by the Toronto Atmospheric Fund.

For more information, visit [www.greenestcity.org](http://www.greenestcity.org).

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