

600 students mobilizing climate action in the Central Okanagan!

Almost 700 Central Okanagan teachers, students, and community mentors are collaborating to create local climate solutions through a ground-breaking program started in Vernon called [Climate Action Ripple Effect \(CARE\)](#).



Spearheaded by the Fresh Outlook Foundation in partnership with School District 23, CARE Kick-Offs were recently held at schools in Kelowna, West Kelowna, and Lake Country. While this marks CARE's pilot in the Central Okanagan, it's been mobilizing student and community climate action in Vernon and Lumby since 2022.

To first spark their curiosity, students at the kick-offs explored climate challenges and opportunities related to nature, agriculture, energy, waste, transportation, human health, and culture.

Teams are now exploring how to apply their collective skills, talents, and passions to the creation of community-focused projects that support United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and local climate objectives, such as those outlined in the City of Kelowna's [Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy](#).

"Students are also preparing to work with community mentors on real-world problems that spark their interests," says SD23 CARE teacher Aaron Veenstra. "We're encouraging students to dream big, and then we'll support them as they take action on issues they really care about."

Jo de Vries, CARE coordinator and founder and CEO of Fresh Outlook Foundation, emphasizes the key role played by the 'ripple effect' in changing climate values, attitudes, behaviours, social norms, and community cultures.

"The ripple effect is a powerful tool for climate action," says de Vries. "In CARE, it starts within students as they learn about climate change and climate action. Waves grow in their classrooms as they collaborate with mentors and teammates. Community-sized ripples are then formed when they talk with their families, friends, and/or workmates about what they've learned and how they're taking action."

While middle school students will showcase their projects at the Expo of Awesome on May 15th in Kelowna, secondary students will celebrate their learning at the CARE Expo in Vernon May 29th.

If you're interested in joining the growing CARE movement as a mentor or sponsor, connect with kasey@freshoutlookfoundation.org.

Photos & Captions:



Students visiting the Waste Reduction station were tasked with sorting through a bag of school garbage to identify recyclables and compostables.



Students were given workbooks to record what they noticed, what they wondered about, and what really interested them.



Students were prompted to explore and discuss how climate change affects human health and people from diverse cultures.

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