



Greening Sacred Spaces holds Annual Awards Night and Networking Event

A celebration of greening achievements by faith-based organizations in Halton-Peel region

The Halton-Peel Region chapter of Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) ([link](#)) celebrated its achievements at the annual GSS Awards Night and Networking Event on Thursday, May 4, 2017 in Oakville. Two organizations received awards for their greening initiatives in 2016. The venue was the Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre ([link](#)) – a scenic location with tranquil flower gardens, and a special outdoor labyrinth.

GSS is the most popular program run by Faith and the Common Good ([link](#)), a national, interfaith network committed to protecting the ecosystem combined with a passion for community service. Its resources include workshops, case studies, posters, guides, environmental services, certification and award ceremonies. Every year, they work with about 600 faith communities from denominations. It also hosts almost 1,000 green events and activities that reach over 10,000 Canadians. GSS Halton Peel is a program of the Halton Environmental Network (HEN) ([link](#)) and work specifically throughout Halton & Peel to provide these services.

The well-attended event recognised the achievement of faith communities and their accomplishments over the past year, and provided an opportunity for faith representatives to network with each other. The attendees included some from communities interested in learning about GSS programs, and how to become eligible for the awards next year.

Environmentally aware faith organizations in the Halton-Peel region that have green initiatives to celebrate and would like to be considered for these awards should contact GSS Program Coordinator at Chantelle Misheal at haltonpeel@faithcommongood.org.

Lucy Cummings, Executive Director of Faith and the Common Good, gave a warm welcome to the gathering highlighting that this event was the best part of the organization's work because it recognized the hard work of the faith communities.

Guest speaker Tristan Mohamed, who is also a board member of Halton Environmental Network, gave a thought-provoking presentation on Ecospirituality and Mindfulness. Those interested in this form of meditation and self-improvement may contact Chantelle Misheal (see email above) for more information.



Above: Lucy Cummings, Executive Director of Faith and the Common Good, welcoming attendees



Above: Tristan Mohamed talks about Ecospirituality and Mindfulness

Ramsha Ahmed, former Program Coordinator of GSS at HEN, thanked the Ontario Trillium Foundation for its Seed Grant that had enabled the GSS to work at its mission of assisting faith communities with environmental initiatives through a variety of greening programs in 2016.

The six contenders for this year's awards were Erin Mills Church Campus, and Solel Congregation (both from Mississauga), and the Church of the Incarnation, St. Luke's Anglican Church, St. Simon's Anglican Church, and The Meeting House (all from Oakville).

The two awards went to Solel Congregation, Mississauga, and St Simon's Anglican Church, Oakville. Details about the green initiatives undertaken by these two faith-based organisations will be available on the GSS website ([link](#)).



Holding the 2016 Greening Sacred Spaces Awards are: Left - Brad Bass, for Solel Congregation, Mississauga; Right - Robert Decker, for St. Simon's Anglican Church, Oakville

Attendees enjoyed a light and delicious vegetarian meal, served buffet-style. The highly environmentally conscious fare was vegan, fair trade certified, palm oil neutral, and locally produced. Local companies B. Good ("We Make Real Food") ([link](#)), Goodness Me! Natural Food Markets ("Grow Green, Garden Clean") ([link](#)), Pat's Party Rentals ([link](#)) and Ten Thousand Villages (a fair trade retailer) ([link](#)) supplied the food, tea, coffee, and dinnerware.



A view of Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre, Oakville

A new funding for GSS from the Ontario 150 Partnership Program will enable two schools in the Halton-Peel region to create a habitat with emphasis on indigenous gardens, incorporating native species of herbs and plants ([link](#)). Get your faith community involved in sustainable initiatives today and find out more about the awards application process by signing up for their monthly newsletter ([link](#)).

By Sima Carri, Halton Environmental Network

Greening Sacred Spaces Halton Peel is a program of the Halton Environmental Network and a chapter of Faith and the Common Good. Generously supported through the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

