



An Unfolding Vision

Story of Inspiration

In 2010, Spencer Kielar, then twelve years old, had an idea to create a water garden where insects and animals could have a place to drink. Over the following years, he researched the idea, explored the process of creating a small pond and investigated the types of plants that would thrive in this environment. At the same time, Spencer supported the younger children with their gardens and their own visions for the land.

Spencer continued to evolve the vision for his pond as he gathered new information. He wanted a pond of different depths so that there were places deep enough for fish and frogs to survive the winter. He wanted a shallow bog area where aquatic plants could grow and a pathway and bridge for children to appreciate the beauty of the pond. He visited backyard pond owners to ask questions and seek advice. He visited greenhouses that specialized in aquatic plants and asked for opinions and feedback on his ideas. He created a design for a small “backyard pond” that the children and families started to dig so that a water feature could be introduced to the land.

In the fall of 2014, Spencer’s persistence and commitment were recognized by Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Grand River Conservation Authority. They learned of Spencer’s work, came out to see the land and meet the children and agreed to fund the creation of a one-acre wetland on the Children’s Lands Canada site in Middleport, ON.

Once the wetland was dug, Spencer didn’t stop. He immediately enlisted the support of several of his classmates from the Community Environmental Leadership Program in Guelph, Ontario. Together they spent their term researching native species of flora and fauna that would be beneficial for the health of the wetland ecosystem and attract local wildlife to the area. They worked in collaboration with a Conservation, Programs Specialist from Ducks Unlimited who offered feedback and guidance to the young group of researchers.

In January 2015, Spencer presented his research and plans to the children who serve as the

caretakers and decision-makers for the 46-acre Children's Lands site. Deeply impressed, the children unanimously accepted his recommendations for flora and fauna for the wetland and agreed to assist with the planting. The following spring the children planted native water plant species that Spencer researched.

Today, the wetland is visited by hundreds of children and families each year. It continues to be a favourite place for children, as well as a much appreciated home/water source for muskrats, ducks, geese, deer, coyotes, raccoons, waterfowl and the hundreds of microorganisms living below the surface.

Spencer says that his 7 year journey from water garden idea to one acre wetland is best described by a Ralph Emerson quote; *"Adopt the pace of nature: Her secret is patience"*.

Thank you Spencer for being such a strong leader. The determination and the dedication that you put into this project is truly inspirational. You are a powerful example of what is possible when you believe in yourself and the gifts that you have to offer to the world.



Children and families helping to plant Spencer's water plants at the wetland.



Deer leave evidence that animals are visiting the wetland



Children leaving their own tracks for the animals to discover



Each year, children enjoy spending quiet time by the water



One of our many new visitors



Children continue to add signs and art



Children and parents build dock together



Each year school groups come to enjoy the wetland

