



# ONEIG



**11 YEARS LEFT ON THE CLOCK .**

## Overview:

- Introduction to our New President Elect
- Introduction to our new Membership Executive Officer/ Newsletter Editor
- Interest group meeting and RNAO Assembly
- David Suzuki Speech
- Story from student contributor: Sam

## Thank You to all the ONEIG Members!

Welcome to all ONEIG members. The ONEIG executive appreciate all of the passionate members of ONEIG. We want to express our gratitude for your efforts in fighting for a greener earth and your resilience in staying committed! Thank you for staying committed and making a difference.

With the chilly winds of Autumn finally rolling around, it's time to buckle down into some warm clothes, and get excited about the impact we can make this monumental fall! Please, remember to cast your ballot for climate action in the federal election on Oct 21st. Thank you to all of you who joined us for the climate action webinar with the David Suzuki Foundation on September 25th. If you weren't able to attend the live event, the webcast is [archived here](#). ONEIG's Mobilizing Nurses for Climate Action Toolkit is [available here](#).

This issue of the ONEIG Newsletter showcases the newest instalments regarding our new ONEIG executive team members; a message from our New President Elect Elise Skinner and Membership Executive Mahnoor Javed. In addition, you'll find what the ONEIG were up to at the RNAO Annual Assembly and Chapter/ Interest Group meeting this past September, and what we learned at the David Suzuki x Stephen Lewis x Buffy Event in Toronto! Finally, you'll hear from a University of Windsor Nursing student and her plea for action.

Thank you to all the ONEIG executive. They truly make the gears of ONEIG spin year round!

# PROUD TO BE YOUR NEW PRESIDENT

BY ELISE SKINNER

On Sept 4th, I formally took on the role of the new president of ONEIG. I assume this role from now past-president Kerrie Pickering. Kerrie held the president role for a number of years and has led and tirelessly supported the group in more ways than can be counted. She's presented for and represented ONEIG at numerous events, she's assumed the responsibilities for the finance role as it remained vacant, she's encouraged new members and facilitated countless meetings with skill and kindness. She is someone who has gone above and beyond and has led us in sharing her passion for health and environmental issues. Kerrie has led ONEIG very well and on behalf of our executive committee and membership, I extend a heartfelt thanks.



My journey to this role is one fuelled by a passion for social justice and health equity. In my work in community nursing, I've helped to improve access to health services for people who are vulnerably housed. This kind of nursing work is a constant reminder of the interconnected nature of issues of poverty, homelessness, trauma, addiction, mental health, food security and poor health outcomes.

Beyond this, this nursing work is a reminder of how many social problems are symptoms of larger problematic societal structures and ideologies—such as capitalist imperatives of wealth accumulation and beliefs in limitless economic growth. These structures and ideologies are premised on individualism; the value of communities and the natural world are not part of the calculus.



The journey of bringing a child into the world has prompted in me a need for reconsideration of many things (as is the case for all parents, I imagine). What world am I bringing my child into? What world do I want for him? What am I doing to make this world possible? These are heavy questions to contemplate in our current world and part of what brought me to the leadership role in ONEIG.



As you may know, the leading science on climate change indicates we have about 11 years to take sweeping collective action to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Understanding what is happening and the action needed is daunting. In advocating for climate action, ONEIG has a role in promoting understanding of the link between climate change and human health. There is a new resource to this end from the New England Journal of Medicine and I'm proud to be part of ONEIG in its involvement in the Ontario Public Health Association's Make It Better campaign.

To return to the feeling of being overwhelmed and grieved by all that we understand is happening to the natural world, I keep the words of Stephen Lewis close to heart "we don't have time for the luxury of despair." It is time for all of us to come together and push for profound and immediate social and political changes needed to prevent devastating impacts of climate change.



As nurses, we are guided by a code of ethics, and the issue of how we respond to the climate crisis is very much essential to our ethical duty of respect for life.

As a nurse, I work hard to advocate for my clients' well-being. There is the hope that our elected representatives are working to do the same. On environmental issues, so much work remains to be done. We need to hold our elected individuals to account. We need to demand far more. Earlier this year, ONEIG unsuccessfully advocated against the repeal of the Toxics Reductions Act in Bill 66. On the national level, we have an upcoming federal election. We need to demand immediate and urgent climate action from the officials we elect. The RNAO has come out with its environmental election platform, which includes: establishing greenhouse gas emission targets consistent with current scientific evidence, strengthening the national carbon pricing regime, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, and investing in green infrastructure, including public transit and active transportation. I proudly support RNAO in these demands.

At this prescient time, I welcome the opportunity to support the voices of all Ontario nurses for the environment. This work requires you, all of you, to be involved. Tell us about what you are doing in your community to advocate for immediate climate action. Join us and feel empowered in knowing that you are working towards sustaining the well-being of our world for future generations.

Take advantage of the learning opportunities ONEIG makes available. Take heart in the spirit of solidarity.

**"WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THE LUXURY OF DESPAIR."**

# MY FIGHT FOR CLIMATE HEALTH

BY MAHNOOR JAVED

Environmental issues have always been a part of my life growing up. It was the norm and I didn't understand the entirety of the issue at hand. During nursing school, we learned that the environment is one of the detriments of health, and I acknowledged that information as fact, but didn't really reflect upon it much.

In 2016 a film was released titled *Migrant Dreams*. It was directed by Min Sook Lee and produced by Lee and Valencia Svensson. The film explored the life of migrant workers in the Canadian agriculture field - showing their struggles, their mistreatment and the endangerment to their health under the Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program

This documentary was the first time I had ever felt particular worked up over any issue. The film documented lives of innocent workers put through dangerous working conditions to the point of where their health was directly being impacted. Many workers knew someone who had developed cancer from their time being exposed to harsh chemicals without wearing proper, protective gear.

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**Everyone has to search for why they are in this struggle. Then you can really flourish!”**



The injustice was infuriating, and for the first time, I understood how vulnerable we are to the things that are degrading our planet earth.

I reached out to become an advocate for environmental health. As ONEIG's newest Membership Executive Officer, I hope to advocate for voices that are being muffled out by corrupt, greedy forces that are also actively contributing to the early death of our world.

In this day and age, many people have the perception that environmental health is mainly the health of our planet; that it's a fight to preserve our planet. But what we often miss is the fact that environmental health is about people too. It's an issue that affects many people to the core. All over the world, there are crimes against the earth and against humanity that wreck havoc on our ecosystems, and on our bodies.

ONEIG helps us stay up to date with the current reality of our world and politics surrounding the environmental problems that are ever growing. ONEIG has given me a greater ability to seek out change and has allowed my passion for the future of our world to grow!

I hope that with all of our effort in this movement, we can be the change the world so desperately needs right now!



# IG MEETING: Interest Group Meeting and RNAO Assembly

BY ELISE SKINNER

Mahnour Javed, ONEIG's Communication ENO, and I had the opportunity to attend the Interest Group meeting and RNAO Assembly on September 13 and 14. As Noor and I are both new to our leadership roles, this weekend was a great opportunity to get to know each other as well as learn about the resources available to us and the processes guiding our work as an interest group.

The evening Interest Group meeting on Sept 13 was carefully facilitated by Julie Rubel, the new Interest Group Board Representative. This gathering allowed us to connect face to face with numerous other interest group representatives and to discover that, like ONEIG, many other interest groups have new folks in leadership roles. During the session, we received clarifications and updates from Carrie Edwards, the RNAO Senior Membership & Services Coordinator, on processes and tools available to interest groups, such as the Leadership Manual and Interest Group Toolkit.

We had the opportunity to gather in smaller groups to discuss the challenges and opportunities encountered in the work of other groups. I had the opportunity to hear insights from the Pediatric Nurses Interest Group on their experiences with succession planning—a preview of their presentation to Assembly the next day. The session also included a profile from the work of the Complementary Therapies' Nursing Interest Group provided by Piroška Bata. She reminded me of the importance of the healing environment, the vital importance of holding space for others for healing to unfold.

Assembly was an all-day event on Saturday. The President and CEO Reports were presented in the morning. With respect to the AGM, emphasis was placed on the importance of ensuring that consultation representatives arrive on time for morning orientation—any individual late to arrive will not be permitted entry.



*"The Interest Group meeting and Assembly were engaging and enlightening events."*

During the time allotment for members' voices, I described some of ONEIG's activities over the past year (including our efforts to support bike lane expansion in Toronto, letter-writing campaign to stop roadside spraying) and plugged our September 25 webcast with the David Suzuki Foundation on mobilizing nurses for climate action. After this announcement, the email invitation for the webcast was sent out to all RNAO members as per requests from other members in attendance.

During the breaks, there was an opportunity for membership to record a short video for social media on what we are voting for as nurses in the upcoming federal election, reflective of the RNAO's election platform that came out in September. Voting for climate action was an easy choice for my message. RNAO's media team present that day also helped me to prepare a message in support of the Make It Better Campaign.

Other highlights of the day included the importance of learning from the successes of others, identifying and building on networking opportunities, aiming for "fast-facts and food" instead of "lunch and learns" to engage students and getting a sneak peek from the RNAO's IT department about the soon-to-go-live revamped RNAO website. Following this latter presentation and discussion with the IT department, ONEIG decided that we will migrate oneig.ca to a section hosted on the RNAO website, similar in look and feel to the new page for Nursing Students of Ontario. As of the writing of this piece, the oneig.ca is no longer active. Members can continue to follow our activities on Facebook and via email communication.

In sum, the Interest Group meeting and Assembly were engaging and enlightening events and I hope to extend the value of these experiences through my role with ONEIG.



## Environment First Tour

WITH DAVID SUZUKI, STEPHEN LEWIS AND BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE

BY MAHNOOR JAVED

ONEIG executive Hilda Swirsky, Elise Skinner and I had the great opportunity to attend an instalment of the David Suzuki Environment First Tour at the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall.

The beautiful hall was jam packed with eager listeners as the event began. David Suzuki spoke of the world's state and how little time we had left in our fight. His speech was reality, tinted with hope, and his optimism was present in the air despite his despair for how much destruction we have yet to overcome. His biggest point was his disappointment in the fact that children are now forced to be involved in fighting climate change instead of simply living as children. In other words, they are forced to be the adults in the room. This isn't supposed to be children's fight - they should be children, out having fun - they shouldn't be out here fighting for the sake of their future. David Suzuki took this point to urge young people to actively participate in voting for their future this Oct. 21.



Stephen Lewis explained where the stem of the issue arose from in his opinion; the oil, gas and coal companies. Large corporations that are blind to everything except money. He urged for a change - in putting those responsible for contributing to damaging the environment, in positions of accountability, including government officials and people in positions of power. He spoke of the hypocrisy of government officials; those that endorsed the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect ecosystems, while at the same time, bought pipelines with out consequence.) Accountability is a must.

Finally, Buffy Sainte-Marie gave a spectacle of a performance - her voice ringing loud and beautiful, singing songs of regret and hope. Her songs were gut-wrenching reminders of exactly what is at stake and was the perfect way to tie up an excellent night of passionate discussions and brilliant speeches.

Once each speaker had presented, questioning period began where questions from the audience were answered on the spot. The questions, ranging from seeking out general opinions to personal inquiries, did justice in delving into different viewpoints, and bringing up arguments from various sectors.

The event showed just how much interest our community has for Environmental issues. For more information on The Climate First Tour and what David Suzuki and his team is up to, visit [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org).





***BE THE VOICE FOR  
TOMORROW:  
CAST YOUR VOTE  
TODAY!***

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Our  
children  
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voice!”

BY SAMANTHA MCCONNEY  
UWINDSOR NURSING '21

No one is immune to environmental health problems, locally or globally. The different environmental threats we face every day are not biased and continue to threaten this wonderful place we call home, increasingly jeopardizing the future of our children. With the effects of global warming making it ever so clear for the need to contribute to a greener and more sustainable society, we leave ourselves asking what we can do to help, and reduce the waste that is contributing to our ecological decline.

With the upcoming election on October 21, we have an opportunity to select a leader who can provide a platform that considers our environmental woes, and makes a noteworthy impact for our future generations. It is important that my spouse and I go out and vote, because we believe in trying to achieve a greater good for our community and children.

Canada currently participates in several federal environmental assessments that include; mines and pipelines with a special focus on the health of Canada's indigenous peoples. Currently, Canada's upcoming election is bringing promises of implementing emissions targets, banning single use plastics, cutting big oil and gas subsidies, and making it easier to own zero-emissions vehicles. I encourage all of my fellow citizens to take a minute, and look up what platform speaks to them, while keeping in mind the future generations, and our collective environmental health. Visit RNAO (<https://rnao.ca/federal-election-2019>) for more information.

Our children are our future, but we must be their voice, until they are loud enough to be heard amongst the masses.