

ONEIG WINTER 2023



ONTARIO NURSES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Official Newsletter of ONEIG
An RNAO Interest Group

Freezing Rain

JOSALYN RADCLIFFE - ONEIG CO-CHAIR



Freezing rain can create beautiful scenes like this one, but it also comes with significant health risks. Ice storms are associated with increased injuries due to falls and motor vehicle collisions and can cause power outages that increase stress, cold exposure and rates of carbon monoxide poisoning (due to use of portable generators and heaters). The 2022 report "Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate" summarizes the impacts of increasing extreme weather events due to the climate crisis and states "Having adequately trained and an appropriate number of staff in health facilities has been identified as the most important factor in ensuring the resilience of health services during disasters" (p.179).

Clearly our current nursing crisis in Ontario will only become increasingly dangerous as the climate change worsens.

Berry, P., & Schnitter, R. (Eds.). (2022). Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate: Advancing our Knowledge for Action. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada. <https://doi.org/10.4095/329522>

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ONEIG Goes to COP15 in Montreal

JOSALYN RADCLIFFE & ROB SAMULACK - ONEIG CO-CHAIRS

Back in mid-December, we travelled to Montreal to participate in public events at the Conference of the Parties 15 (COP15) United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Montreal (aka 'Nature COP') as ONEIG representatives. While there, we attended the Indigenous-led march from the Jacques Cartier monument to downtown along with Canadian Association for Nurses for the Environment (CANE) representative Fiona Hanley. We were sandwiched by numerous other groups, activists for birds, Communists, and Extinction Rebellion, many in colourful and creative costumes. Rob's 4-year-old refused his snowsuit until a Montreal police officer on horseback kindly informed them that snowsuits are required at -10 C.

Greenpeace Canada, one of the main organizers, provided sandwiches and supplies to keep march participants fed and healthy. They gave the mini snowsuit protester some hand warmers as well. We represented Canadian nurses with signs for "Planetary Health = Human Health" marked with both ONEIG and CANE logos. We discussed potential CANE-ONEIG partnerships too (there will be more to come on this front in the near future!).

A big focus at these United Nations conferences is giving platforms to those who do not often have voices at the table. Well-funded lobby groups funded by extraction companies often get seats at decision-making tables, and COP is no different. Still, the focus here is to amplify and provide opportunities for marginalized voices to speak about how climate change and biodiversity loss affect their peoples, stories often unheard in mainstream Western media. A significant focus was the need for higher-income nations to pay a fair share to lower-income nations to support their efforts. This is truly a discussion about justice, given the ways wealthier nations have benefited directly from the exploitation of lower-income ones (i.e. via resource extraction and labour). (For more on this, see Part 2 of this article!)

Kindness is
like snow – it
beautifies
everything it
covers."

~KAHLIL GIBRAN

Did you know?

RNAO (with ONEIG) is part of the Ontario Climate Emergency Campaign, which regularly organizes and responds to policy decisions that affect the environment and health, including Bill 23.

Read about issues, sign petitions, and consider volunteering by visiting the OCEC site:

<https://www.ontarioclimateemergency.ca>



ONEIG Goes to COP15

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in Montreal

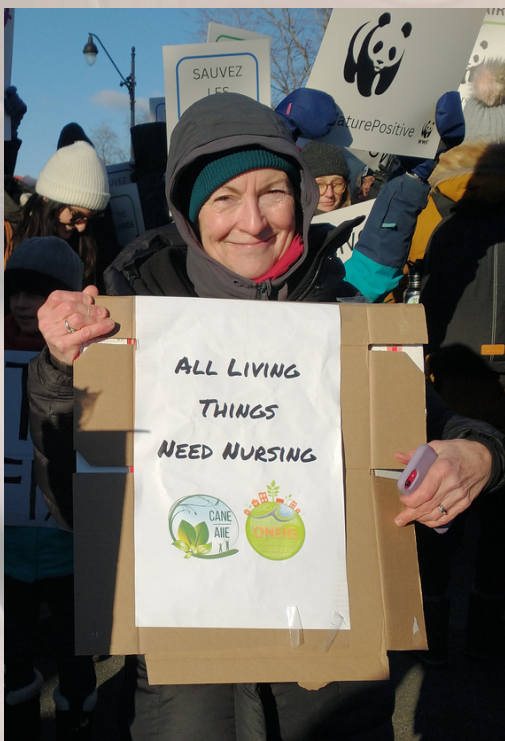
Josalyn Radcliffe & Rob Samulack- ONEIG Co-Chairs

Nurses must be a part of these events and movements as trusted voices with influence. Typically these conferences have been dominated by energy companies; policy makers are protestors. Climate change and biodiversity loss are impacting human health directly, and we have to make a seat for ourselves at the table to deliver that message. The notion of “Saving the Earth” is outdated; nurses advocate for “Saving Us.” Pictures of polar bears, windmills and solar panels were old depictions of climate change. It needs to be refugee camps baking in the sun, flooded cholera-filled water, kids with asthma exacerbations caused by wildfires, homes burnt to the ground, Inuit losing access to animal foods they have eaten for millennia, and homes built on permafrost falling into the sea. Ultimately, as planetary health and Indigenous wisdom teach us, human health is inextricably tied to the health of our environments, including all other forms of life.



Our time together in Montreal wrapped up with some Pho and a chance to connect (for the first time!) in real life. The following day we parted ways- Josalyn took the early train back from Montreal to their home in Kitchener-Waterloo while Rob and his family went to the Montreal Science center.

Timed along with COP15, the Montreal Science center had an exhibit on climate change and its effects in Canada. Not only was there an interactive video featuring Rick Mercer as a sheep from Sudbury science North, but there were numerous exhibits on how climate change is affecting Canadians. From the impact of our disposable clothing industry, the effects of air pollution on human health, the loss of biodiversity throughout Canada to the ways the warming climate is increasing storms, there were interactive science exhibits. The exhibits allowed kids of all ages (adults included) to understand both the complexities and subtleties of the science. Simultaneously, there was an official COP15 event occurring behind closed doors at the same venue. Unfortunately, we didn't have accreditation to access this event but hopefully nurses from ONEIG will have representation and a seat at the table at such events in the near future.



Part Two: Powerlands

After the March, our family members returned to their warm hotel rooms while we continued on to a film screening of the Powerlands (<https://powerlands.org/>) at the PHI center focusing on the exploitation of Indigenous peoples by resource extraction companies. These large multinational extraction companies (oil, coal, gold, rare earth minerals) continue to exploit, murder, and intimidate Indigenous communities worldwide with long-lasting local and planetary health impacts. The film highlighted the ways that colonialism continues in our present and requires continued attention and action to address these environmental and social injustices.

Highlights from Powerlands:

- The Navajo Nation (southwestern USA) being exploited by Peabody and BHP to mine coal. Almost all their water was removed from the ground aquifers. After 30 years, the companies left, but the wells are contaminated and the cancer rates are high. Some themes were: art is feeling and resistance culture.
 - The Wayuu people (northern Colombia) are being exploited by the Goldcore owned Cerrejón open-pit coal mine. They no longer have water and are routinely covered by fine black dust.
 - Philippines - BHP and Glencore were operating open-pit mines and a water dam. The military has forced the Indigenous population to relocate using machine guns and have killed women and children in the process. The Capion family were victims of this and their story is highlighted. There are arrest warrants for 50 people in connection to opposition to the mines. Soldiers have shot at school children. 300 land defenders have been killed in the Philippines in 20 years. This government-sanctioned extractionism has led to communist militias. Even children have been labeled as members of the communist New People's Army and have been targeted by the military. Civilian resistance pushed Glencore out of the Philippines.
 - Standing Rock - the story of the Indigenous-led stand-off with armed police in North Dakota, USA, over the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline through the Standing Rock Sioux territory. Indigenous youth rallied together in opposition to the pipeline. It became a very widely publicized political event and there have been several legal actions taken since. There was an order to shut down the pipeline which got overturned on appeal.
 - Oaxaco, Mexico - The Mexican government gave away their territory for wind farms. None of the electricity comes to the community. There were several issues of corruption in the development process. The Indigenous people can no longer fish on their ancestral sandbar. The community has been threatened with assassinations in attempts to force them off their land. The community wants to create its own renewable energy projects but the government has opposed them.
- Reflection: While these stories of modern colonialism and extraction negatively affecting Indigenous peoples in other countries, Canada has a long history of similar problems: high cancer rates downstream of the Alberta tar sands in Fort Chipewyan; forced relocations for hydroelectric projects in Quebec, Manitoba and Labrador; and the on-going construction of the Coastal GasLink through Wet'suwet'en in British Columbia.

Environmental Adventure

Playas del Coco, Costa Rica

Victoria Ralph

I was honored to visit this non-profit rescue farm that originated in 2005 by a woman named Vicki Conley. She came to Costa Rica to rescue monkeys from a devastating earthquake. They



create rope bridges for the monkeys to decrease the amount of burns they receive from traveling on electrical wires (See picture). The farm quickly grew to include many other animals such as bunnies, peacocks, turtles, chickens, turkeys, goats, and cows. It has evolved into a self-sustainable environment and includes an aquaponics area in which they utilize water

from a self-sustaining tilapia pond fertilized with feces from the animals and treated with clay tiles to grow their own fruit, vegetables, and herbs (see picture); and an herbal garden that includes but is not limited to aloe vera (contains antibacterial properties and healing components), the twelve o'clock plant (helps with nerve and muscle relaxation), an insulin plant (help with glucose regulation) (see picture), stevia (natural sugar), Cow (cancer fighting properties), and many more.



These are used often for the volunteers and tourists in making a delicious tea. They



also grow a beautiful tree called a Moringa tree. It is 100% edible, and 10 grams of dried leaves contains 17 times the calcium of milk, 25 times the iron of spinach, 9 times the protein of yogurt, 10 times the vitamin A of carrots, 15 times the potassium of bananas. It also has all 9 essential amino

acids that your body cannot produce on its own, capability of filtering water through the seeds which remove 99.9% of all impurities and doubles the milk production of all mammals who consume it. It can also be regrown multiple times by breaking a branch off and replanting it, creating an efficient source of nutrients.



When you visit, you can experience milking a baby goat which they use to make cheese, yogurt, kefir, ice cream, and beverages; bottle feed calves and baby goats; play with chickens, turkeys, ducks, and see their eggs; and hear the bees making a buzz with their medicinal honey production. They provide



many variations of interactive farm tours and learning about their self-sustainable ways, as well as horseback riding through the jungle and onto the beach. These can range from \$10 to \$350USD. This is their only source of income besides donations.

In addition to the entertainment of tourists, they are well established and involved in the community of Playas Del Coco. Every Tuesday night they use their excess food to provide dinners for the homeless. While doing this in 2019, they saw a need for help with many of their homeless clients and have now adapted them into the farm to support them with purpose, stimulation, and a chance to learn English to enhance job opportunities in the future. The farm is currently rehabilitating men with addictions and mental health issues but is not yet



officially licensed with the government. In order to be certified with the government for the 13 month REACT program, they are required to prove financial stability for one year out. Tourism is not considered a stable income. Automated monthly donations of any amount provide them with proof and can be completed online at [The Monkey Farm Donation](#). This will greatly help them along their incredible journey while providing you with a tax deduction.



If you are planning a trip, make it to Costa Rica. Visit this enheartening farm and rehabilitation center. It is uplifting and exciting to see the effort, hard work, caring attitude, and progress this group of fulfilling individuals have accomplished and put into the world around them. They make a difference in their own lives, the community of Playas del Coco, and the wildlife of Costa Rica.

Written by Victoria Ralph (ONEIG Finance Executive)



HILDA'S CORNER

UPDATES FROM HILDA SWIRSKY

ONEIG'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF NURSES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (CANE)

WITH ONGOING PASSION AND EXCITEMENT AS SPRING AND EARTH DAY APPROACHES, I SHARE WITH YOU CURRENT UPDATES:

FROM THE ALLIANCE OF NURSES FOR HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS (ANHEI)

SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE CLIMAT4E CHANGE CHALLENGE:

- EXPLORING DEVELOPING A SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLIMATE JUSTICE, EQUITY AND INCLUSION
- IMPORTANT FACT: IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY, IT'S WHAT OTHERS HEAR
- DEVELOPING AN ADVISORY COUNCIL WITH HEALTH CARE WITHOUT HARM
- WORKING ON ORGANIZING A VIRTUAL SUMMIT
- ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN CLEAN MED 2023 IN PITTSBURG, THE PREMIER NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LEADERS IN HEALTH CARE SUSTAINABILITY [HTTPS://CLEANMED.ORG](https://cleanmed.org)

FROM CANE:

- NOW INCORPORATED AND STRIVING TO ACHIEVE CHARITABLE STATUS
- UPDATE ON FOSSIL-FUEL BAN: COMPETITION BUREAU TO INVESTIGATE CANADIAN GAS ASSOCIATION
- MEMBERSHIP CURRENTLY 106 MEMBERS AND 65 STUDENT MEMBERS
- CANE MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RECENTLY SENT OUT
- ON-GOING DISCUSSIONS ON A CLOSER PARTNERSHIP WITH ONEIG
- WILL BEGIN INVITING MEMBERS TO EXECUTIVE MEETINGS AS CANE/ONEIG RELATIONSHIP BECOMES A STANDING AGENDA ITEM: ONEIG MEMBER TO CANE MEETING AND CANE MEMBER TO ONEIG MEETING
- THE FIRST NEWSLETTER ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION JUST CAME OUT AND WAS SENT TO THE EXECUTIVE
- ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE CREATED ITS FIRST NEWSLETTER ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH
- EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE HAS A REPOSITORY OF RESOURCES
- PR COMMITTEE WORKING ON POLICY FOR ETHICAL DONATIONS SPONSORSHIPS & WORK CONTRACTS
- WILL MEET TO CONTINUE WORK ON DRAFT POLICY ON DIGITAL CONTACT & SOCIAL MEDIA

ONEIG UPDATE:

· CONNECTED WITH OUR SPEAKER ALAIN NORMAND TO ASK HIM IF HE WILL BE GOING TO TURKEY TO HELP OUT. HE WILL IN A FEW MONTHS WHEN THE POPULATION WILL BE FOCUSED ON RECOVERY. IF YOU MISSED HIS WEBINAR, IT CAN BE FOUND ON: HERE IS THE LINK YOU CAN SHARE TO VIEW IT: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=MOOZKAMEFZNC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moozkamefznc)

INTERSECTION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ANXIETY WAS AN EXCELLENT COLLABORATIVE WEBINAR ON A CURRENT TROUBLING CONCERN: IF YOU MISSED IT, YOU CAN STILL FIND IT ON YOUTUBE. HERE IS THE LINK YOU CAN SHARE TO VIEW IT: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=MOOZKAMEFZNC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moozkamefznc)

SYSTEM RECOVERY

· TORONTO STAR HAD AN EXCELLENT ARTICLE ON SYSTEM RECOVERY SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH
· VARIOUS EXPERTS GAVE SOLUTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUR TROUBLING HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

· TO ADDRESS CROWDED EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND HAVE A HEALTHIER POPULATION, EVERY SINGLE CITIZEN SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO A FAMILY DOCTOR OR NURSE PRACTITIONER AND THE INTEGRATED TEAM BEHIND THEM

· FOR THE GROWING ELDERLY POPULATION: INVESTMENT NOT ONLY IN LONG-TERM CARE BUT ALSO IN HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE TO KEEP SENIORS HEALTHY

· IN THE PEDIATRIC POPULATION, THE PRIORITY IS TO INCREASE STAFF AND RESOURCES

· SHIFTING TO A GEOGRAPHICAL MODEL OF PRIMARY CARE

· SURVEYED CANADIANS WANT THEIR PRIMARY HEALTH PROVIDER TO KNOW THEM AS A PERSON

· EVERY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER SHOULD GO THROUGH ANTI-RACISM TRAINING

· MONEY ALSO HAS TO BE SPENT ON IMPROVING HOUSING, GETTING WORKING TOILETS WHERE NEEDED, ENDING WATER ADVISORIES, EXPANDING BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS TO SUPPORT TELEMEDICINE

· THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUTH BETWEEN 15-24 WERE HIT THE HARDEST

· RATES OF ANXIETY IN YOUTH WERE ALREADY RISING BEFORE COVID

· YOUTH TAKE A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THEIR OVERALL HEALTH, AS DO HUBS

· HUBS ARE DESIGNED TO TAKE AN OVERALL HOLISTIC APPROACH TO YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

· RECOMMENDATION TO EXPAND HOLISTIC AGENCIES, ESPECIALLY ONES WORKING WITH UNDERSERVED, RACIALIZED POPULATIONS

· RECOMMEND CREATING A DATABASE OF THE CANADIAN HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE, WHERE THEY WORK AND WHAT IS THE RIGHT TEAM.

· RECOMMEND PROFESSIONALS FIND IT EASIER TO MOVE AMONG PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES



LET'S TALK ONEIG!!

ATTENTION NURSES WHO CARE ABOUT PLANETARY HEALTH!

OUR ONEIG EXECUTIVE TEAM IS LOOKING FOR YOU! OUR CALLS FOR NOMINATION WILL BEGIN IN APRIL. PLEASE REACH OUT ANYTIME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GROUP AND HOW YOU MIGHT WANT TO BE INVOLVED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA OR ONEIGNAO@GMAIL.COM

SAVE THE DATE:

OUR TENTATIVE QUARTERLY MEMBER MEETING DATE IS MARCH 22, 2023 FROM 7:30-9PM. KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR INBOX AND OUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE REGISTRATION LINK ONCE AVAILABLE!

QUEEN'S PARK DAY!

ONEIG WILL BE REPRESENTED AT QUEEN'S PARK DAY MARCH 1-3 IN TORONTO, WHERE WE WILL ADVOCATE WITH NURSES FROM ACROSS THE PROVINCE FOR A STRONGER, CLIMATE-RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEM AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.

WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS FOR OUR MPPs? WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO BRING THEM TO THE FOREFRONT AT QUEEN'S PARK! EMAIL THEM TO ONEIGNAO@GMAIL.COM



oneignao@gmail.com



<https://chapters-igs.rnao.ca/interestgroup/36/about>



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https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=oneig+rناو

