

Community Spotlight: Rachel

2017 was a particularly difficult time in my life. Circumstances beyond my control turned my world upside-down, and my mental health suffered immensely in the aftermath. I was feeling lost and disconnected from myself. I struggled to find purpose and meaning, and I was uncertain about my future. I was faced with a chance to start over, and although I was scared to take the risk, I knew I couldn't waste it. This led to a reevaluation of not only my career path, but my entire set of values and identity.

Who was I? Where did I belong?

I would ponder these questions in the solace of nature. Local trails, forests and wetlands provided the only spaces where I felt safe to reflect and be vulnerable. I began volunteering my time as a local steward, but I never considered a career in something I viewed as "community service". But there it was, right in front of me – one small word that would have the biggest impact on my life to this day: "Community".

Suddenly, a group of Eco Warriors emerged to catch my fall with open arms and helping hands.

As the Marketing and Events Coordinator at BurlingtonGreen, I found myself immersed in a world where every event, every initiative, was a step towards a more sustainable future. Armed with garbage bags and a determination to make a difference, I joined hands with local residents to take action for our shared environment. It wasn't just about picking up trash; it was about community-driven change, about fostering connections with like-minded individuals who shared my passion for nature and the betterment of our planet. It felt good to "think global", but it felt even better to "act local".

Though my time at BG was brief, it was nothing short of influential. What started as a job transformed into a personal journey of growth, inspiration and healing. I became more mindful of my consumption. Small, intentional actions, when multiplied, led to significant positive changes. Connecting with nature, incorporating eco-friendly practices into my routine, and cultivating a healthier lifestyle became the unexpected rewards.

BG provided an essential foundation for my career with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, where I promote freshwater science in the Great Lakes to fellow Canadians and raise awareness about aquatic species-at-risk. I'm still an advocate for sustainability, and I still give back to my community. I am currently one of the youngest women to become President of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club in its 100+ year history! I look forward to what's next in my journey.

"I worked at BurlingtonGreen and all I got was this life changing experience"



Much like the clothes I thrift and the items I recycle, I too, found a renewed purpose thanks to BurlingtonGreen. Proof that the transformative power of second chances never goes out of style!