

Community Spotlight:



How do High School students get involved?

Nature's NEAR provides High School students with an opportunity to be environmental leaders and role models to elementary students while also gaining valuable skills, certificates, experiences and knowledge to help prepare them for their future pathway. High School students enrolled in cooperative education (co-op) programs at their school can apply to do their placement with Nature's NEAR. Interested students can send their resume and cover letter to Rachel Irwin (irwinr@hdsb.ca).

How do classrooms sign up?

A google form sign-up sheet is sent out to HDSB elementary teachers with details of the Nature's NEAR program offering happening that season. The programs are offered to junior level students (Grades 4-6). Nature's NEAR works to schedule as many schools/classrooms as possible.

What is Nature's NEAR?

Nature's NEAR is a new Halton District School Board Outdoor and Environmental Initiative that launched in January 2020. The program is led by Naturalist and Outdoor Educator, Rachel Irwin, and her team of High School Co-op students who travel to elementary schools across Halton providing environmental outdoor educational programs right in their own schoolyard. They have provided programming on a variety of nature topics such as biodiversity, birds, pollinators, and more!

What is their Mission?

Oftentimes students think they need to go on a big field trip to experience the natural world, and while those field trips are extremely valuable, Nature's NEAR goal is to connect students to the natural spaces right at their doorstep. To have them connect and care about the spaces and communities they see and live in everyday. You don't have to go far... Nature's NEAR! Our mission is to change the way students and teachers look at their schoolyard or neighbourhood natural spaces while encouraging and providing them with the tools they need to take local action.



Follow them on [Twitter](#) or contact the Program Lead and Outdoor Education Facilitator, Rachel Irwin at irwinr@hdsb.ca.