



Living Winter 2025-26

Final Report

Prepared for the Ontario Wildlife Foundation
May 12, 2026

Your Impact at a Glance

A season of learning, connection, and access made possible through your support



1,599

grade 4 students

gained access to transformative outdoor education experiences that nurtured curiosity, resilience, and belonging.

60+

educators

were supported with resources and experiential learning opportunities to bring nature-based education back to their classrooms.



12

volunteers & practicum students gained hands-on experience in outdoor and environmental education to carry into their everyday lives and future classrooms.



618

volunteer hours

strengthened program capacity and helped keep Living Winter accessible for schools.



A Program Teachers Trust

Teacher feedback highlights the lasting educational value of Living Winter.

Feedback from teachers continues to demonstrate the strong educational impact and value of the Living Winter program. In response to feedback from participating schools regarding rising transportation costs, TBG increased the bus subsidy from \$200 to \$250 per class for the 2025–2026 season, helping ensure transportation does not remain a barrier to participation for priority schools. TBG also expanded its winter clothing collection with the purchase of additional gear for students to borrow, helping ensure every child can comfortably participate in outdoor learning.

Teachers consistently highlighted the value of the program’s hands-on learning approach, curriculum relevance, and the opportunity for students to connect classroom concepts with real-world outdoor experiences. This feedback reinforces Living Winter’s role as a trusted and impactful educational resource for Toronto schools.

Teacher Survey Highlights

- **100%** rated student engagement positively
- **100%** rated instructor knowledge and enthusiasm positively
- **100%** rated the program length positively
- **100%** rated curriculum connections positively
- **100%** rated the booking and confirmation process positively
- **100%** rated access to winter clothing positively
- **100%** said they would attend Living Winter again and recommend the program to other educators

Teacher Testimonials

"Thank you to your donors for providing opportunities, year after year, to my students. My school demographic is composed of new Canadians, refugees, and low-income families who benefit from subsidised programs to help make better use of their public education. We thoroughly appreciate the active outdoor experiences paired with hands-on classroom learning experiences provided by the hardworking people of the Toronto Botanical Garden, as well as the bus subsidy to their gorgeous grounds. Thank you for all that you do."

- Grade 4 Teacher at Oakridge Public School

I have brought my class to the Toronto Botanical Gardens for the Living Winter program for two years and it is an absolute highlight of our year. The learning is perfectly paired to the grade four science curriculum, it is hands-on, and it is incredibly engaging for the students. Our students have the chance to see their learning in the real world and to make connections with their knowledge in a meaningful way. We would not have the opportunity to visit the Toronto Botanical Gardens without this amazing program and we are very appreciative for it.

- Grade 4 Teacher at Grenoble Public School

"Excellent instructing and very attention grabbing activities."

"The program was very thoughtful and touched on many curriculum expectations. The students were very engaged and curious to know more!"

"Gino and team are wonderful! The program was informative and entertaining. A great day!"

"I really love this program and bring my class every year."

- Various 2025-26 Program Teacher Participants



Student Testimonials

"I am thankful for an amazing trip to the Toronto Botanical Garden, hope to come again next year."

- Maiza, Grade 4 student

"I loved when we made the key chain because it reminded me about the life cycles and TBG."

- Prince, Grade 4 student

"I really appreciated how you were teaching me about carnivores, omnivores, decomposers and composers. It was really interesting to see real and fake bones."

- Amber, Grade 4 student

"I really like all of the stations and I like when we were learning about how the seasons affect the animals."

- Aram, Grade 4 student

"I really liked the little hike that we did because it was great exercise for my legs and I love the nature."

- Christian, Grade 4 student



Practicum Student Testimonials

"As a future educator, my experience assisting with the Living Winter program has greatly influenced my appreciation for the value of outdoor education. I was able to see first hand how engaging with nature sparked curiosity amongst the students and gave them such a unique opportunity that only hands-on learning has to offer. This experience allowed me to see the importance and value of outdoor learning and provided me with ways in which I can integrate similar experiences into my future teaching practices."

- 2025-26 Living Winter Practicum Student

"During the programs, I noticed that students were actively engaged, asking questions, collaborating with peers and enjoying the learning process. They were so excited to get to explore their environment and apply what they had learned inside to hands-on activities outdoors. For teachers, I observed that they were enthusiastic about the experience, recognizing that these programs provide students with opportunities they wouldn't usually receive in a traditional classroom setting. They encouraged exploration amongst students, and made connections between in-class learning and students outdoor experiences."

- 2025-26 Living Winter Practicum Student

"I think the TBG taught me, or emphasized, that nature is never absent. There is no human and nature, they will always need to coexist. My experience at TBG makes me want to teach students about that. I also felt that being outside just makes people feel good. When I become a teacher, I want to emphasize the importance of nature preservation and action towards doing so."

- 2025-26 Living Winter Practicum Student



Together, We Made a Difference

Thank you for making this impact possible.

Thanks to your generous support, 1,599 children from priority communities across Toronto experienced the wonder of winter in ways that may have otherwise been out of reach. Your investment in Living Winter helped remove barriers to outdoor education by providing transportation, warm winter clothing, nutritious snacks, and hands-on learning experiences that connected students to nature and to one another.

Through your partnership, students explored winter habitats, discovered local biodiversity, built confidence outdoors, and deepened their understanding of environmental stewardship. For many, this was a first meaningful experience in nature during winter and one they will carry with them long after the season ends.

Your gift also supported teachers, future educators, and volunteers, strengthening a broader community of learning and care around young people.

Thank you for believing in the power of equitable access to nature and education. Your investment is helping nurture curiosity, resilience, and the next generation of environmental stewards.

With gratitude,
The Toronto Botanical Garden Team

