



Media Release

Guelph Hydro Presents Green Sacred Spaces Awards

Unitarian Congregation of Guelph and Dublin St. United Church recognized for their efforts to reduce energy consumption and improve the environment

(GUELPH, ON) March 28, 2011 – Guelph Hydro Inc. is the proud sponsor of the first Green Sacred Spaces Awards of Excellence presented in the Guelph community. Representatives of the Unitarian Congregation of Guelph and Dublin Street United Church were presented with their awards by Guelph Hydro, the Trillium Foundation and Greening Sacred Spaces Waterloo/Wellington/Dufferin during Transition Guelph's Resilience 2011 event held on Saturday, March 26.

The Green Sacred Spaces Awards of Excellence are coordinated and judged by the Greening Sacred Spaces Network, an interfaith and intercultural not-for-profit organization which helps faith congregations green their buildings and communities. Locally, the Greening Sacred Spaces Network comprises more than 100 faith communities in Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin Regions.

The **Unitarian Congregation of Guelph** earned a Green Sacred Spaces Award of Excellence for their work in conducting an energy audit, retrofitting with energy efficient compact fluorescent lighting, upgrading weather-stripping, and initiating a rooftop solar panel project. Congregants are encouraged to take environmental messages home through weekly e-bulletins and e-newsletters. The Unitarian Congregation of Guelph partners with various environmental organizations, mentoring and encouraging tool- and car-sharing cooperatives, Freecycle initiatives – a reuse program focused on reducing landfill, and a Community Shared Agriculture program.

Dublin Street United Church was honoured with a Green Sacred Spaces Award of Excellence for their "Greening Dublin" project that included a community lecture series and hosting a 17-year-strong Community Shared Agriculture program. The church has been retrofitted with motion-activated lights, room-specific temperature control systems, energy-efficient light bulbs, low-flush toilets, a bike rack and a new hot water heating system. Dublin Street United Church's plans for the future include generating energy from a rooftop solar photovoltaic system and installing new energy-efficient windows.

"We are thrilled to see congregations in our community leading by example in the areas of renewable energy and energy conservation," said Ron Collins, Vice-President of Guelph Hydro Inc. in presenting the awards. "In addition to reducing their energy consumption, by installing solar panels on their roofs, they will be contributing to the Guelph Community Energy Initiative's goal of having 1,000 solar roofs in our community and helping to create a cleaner, greener environment."

About Greening Sacred Spaces

Greening Sacred Spaces assists more than 500 faith communities in Canada take action to create a more sustainable and energy-efficient place of worship.

Greening Sacred Spaces helps congregations form “green teams,” provides “how to” guides for improving the energy efficiency of religious buildings, offers downloadable greening resources and educational tools including case studies and funding information, and holds multi-faith community workshops across Canada on topics such as renewable energy and energy conservation .

The Green Sacred Spaces Awards of Excellence recognize the contributions that faith communities have made toward making the environment more sustainable. Recipients are selected based on three criteria:

1. *Practical actions such as completing an energy-efficiency retrofit, microFIT renewable energy project or community garden*
2. *Engagement in numerous local sustainability and energy conservation educational events*
3. *Involvement in outreach programs in the community at large and with other faith communities to encourage energy conservation*

For more information on the Greening Sacred Spaces Network, visit: www.greeningsacredspaces.net/waterloo

About Guelph Hydro Inc.

Guelph Hydro Inc. is actively developing sustainable energy projects as a key implementer of the City of Guelph’s Community Energy Initiative.

Guelph Hydro Inc. is the holding company for Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc., the local electricity distribution company serving 50,000 customers in Guelph and Rockwood, Ontario, and for Ecotricity Guelph Inc., an alternative energy company, also located in Guelph.

For more information, visit: www.guelphhydroinc.com

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