

Dear team leaders,

Hoping this finds you well and finding some time to enjoy some spring sunshine and fresh air. It seems like it's been a while since we had a solid round-up of actions and issues across the network. As a start, here are a couple of the latest inspiring stories, in case you missed them:

[Overview of Earth Day actions](#)

[Just Transition Act joint submission](#) and [here's the story](#) of how Sara, a member of the Ottawa/Gatineau team, became involved in the Just Transition Act movement

[Mother's Day profiles and media coverage](#)

Deep thanks to everyone involved. Sharing your story is incredibly important because it touches other parents and helps them see themselves in the same kinds of roles you're taking on. Okay, there is a long list of updates below, which goes to show the impact you are making. Amazing.

Update on national actions

- **Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty**
Montreal and Victoria have become the latest Canadian cities to endorse the treaty! Canada now has more cities endorsing the treaty than any other country.
And it looks like Ottawa may be next, with a motion to endorse coming to the city's environment committee later in June.
There are now a long list of FOK teams who can offer their experience and insight into how you can encourage your municipality to endorse the treaty: [find out more here!](#)
- **Action on banks**
Teams in the network were part of protests online and in-person at the AGMs of Canada's top 5 banks, calling them out for investing billions of dollars in fossil fuel industries and violating Indigenous rights by supporting pipelines like Coastal GasLink.
In May, we learned we've been granted funds for targetted actions on banks, aimed at broadening awareness and public participation in disruptive actions. Please stay tuned for more. In the meantime, if this is something your team would like to take on, check out info and [ideas for action here](#).
If you haven't seen Bank on a Better Future's very clever video yet, [watch it here](#) and please share.
- **Standing behind Youth Plaintiffs**
For Our Kids Toronto and the national For Our Kids network have applied to intervene in an Ontario lawsuit in support of young people suing the Ontario government for climate inaction. The Mathur et. al. case is being brought by seven youth plaintiffs claiming that the Ontario government's weak climate targets contravene their charter rights and threaten their future survival.
You may remember FOK and PNE/FOK Montreal applied for similar intervenor status in the [la Rose case](#) a couple of years ago. That was not successful; we're hoping for a more positive response this time. The motion was reviewed by the presiding judge last week and a decision is expected within the next few weeks.
- **[Spring Family Action: Making Art of What You Love](#)**
Stay tuned for an update from Natalie on the very cool project she's creating from this action, and one more chance to submit artwork.

- **National Adaptation Strategy: Public Input**

You may have heard (or seen my post on Slack) about the federal government looking for public input into a national adaptation strategy. I'm not gonna lie: it's quite a lot of navigation to provide input through the site <https://letstalkadaptation.ca/> but it is a really important opportunity because some of the questions ask for your specific experiences with the impacts of climate change. And the online forums are already getting populated with ideas and responses.

I'd love to hear your ideas about how we can support your teams or parents within your networks to provide input. My initial thought was to start by mapping out all the questions in a table so that you can get an idea of where you want to focus your responses - suggested responses can be captured in the table as well. Having a kind of map of the questions and possible responses would make it easier to fill out the online part a piece at a time rather than all at once.

Also, the discussion forums are ongoing, and we could track trends and highlight possible issues (greenwashing attempts, for example) and have some responses ready.

If there are team members who are particularly keen on being part of this project, please let me know.

Update on regional actions

- **Ontario's Provincial Election**

If you're living in Ontario, there's very little else hitting the news these days. There are a lot of groups trying to keep climate change a top issue; our focus has been to [frame issues from a parent's perspective](#) and using a climate justice lens.

Just a reminder that, as difficult as it is to be non-partisan in this campaign, it's also a key mandate for FOK.

If there are other ways we can provide support for Ontario teams or your parent networks, let me know.

- **BC Finance Committee public consultations**

We've requested an opportunity to present to the committee in person - haven't yet received confirmation but if we do, that will be open to any member of a BC team.

Some of you will remember that last year, Jennifer from the new Sunshine Coast team and Kathryn, from For Our Grandkids in Victoria, both made powerful presentations to the standing committee: Jennifer's focused on gov't support for electric school buses, and Kathryn's request was for the government to take an emergency approach to climate change in the budget, as they had with the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Here's a link](#) to Jennifer's presentation, and [here is Kathryn's](#).

The in-person presentation would be a great opportunity to follow-up on the call for full financing for electric school buses across the province, since that's something the government has already committed some funding toward. There's a report expected in the next month that could serve as the background, and Ruth is happy to prepare as much of the presentation as needed, if a parent from one of your teams would like to make the presentation.

Last year, there were also excellent individual and joint written submissions from teams. This year, written submissions are being accepted from May 30 - June 24, and there is an online survey open at the same time.

How can we support BC teams in participating? Can we facilitate a joint brainstorming session on messages for written submissions, for example? Let me know.

[Here's the link to the committee's site](#) but the links for the online survey and written submissions are not yet available.

- **Calling out Fortis BC's "learning resources" for classrooms**

FOK hosted a session with Dogwood and CAPE about disturbing learning resources distributed directly to teachers by natural gas giant Fortis BC - disturbing because they amount to propaganda for Fortis and include misleading information about the role natural gas plays in global warming and climate change.

Parents in Victoria did take this issue to their school trustees, who weren't aware of the learning resources and voted to study how they are being used in the district's classes. Meanwhile, teachers in Victoria passed their own motion "that members not use the Fortis BC curriculum".

In an interesting turn of events, Fortis has now taken the learning resources off its website, indicating that they are undergoing a regular annual review process.

We're continuing to work with CAPE and Dogwood to provide resources for parents who want to take this issue to their school boards, since it's not clear whether Fortis will resurface the material for next school year. There will be an action page up shortly.

Update on local actions

- **FOK Saskatchewan: EcoStress Regina group**

At the team leaders' meeting in April, Amy shared a powerful and insightful overview of the EcoStress Regina group she co-created along with a professor of Psychology to address the overwhelming anxiety she has been experiencing; there was an unanticipated amount of interest in the group - she expected five participants and received 27, so the group started two different sessions and has a wait-list for future sessions. The group advertises as follows:

EcoStress Regina offers free 8-week sessions to discuss distress caused by environmental threats and losses. Groups meet for two hours weekly by Zoom. Group meetings are facilitated and include conversation and sharing of our experiences, as well as instruction and practice of coping and self-care knowledge and skills. The group also discusses moving forward, meaningful ways to take action, and building community.

[Here are the notes](#) from the meeting, in case you missed them. The follow-up question for teams was: what role, if any, could the FOK network have in supporting this happening at a local level? How can the network continue/strengthen its core purpose of facilitating social connections for parents who feel isolated in their concern for the environment, and then build that concern into action?

- **Pulling up roots**

Groups in Victoria, Burnaby and Ottawa have been participating in removing invasive plant species from public areas - a very satisfying activity for families and excellent way to reinforce the healthy relationships between native plants, insects and birds. Would love to capture this as an idea for families and teams across the network, so if you've been involved in one of these pulls and would like to share the story, please let me know!

- **Boulevard naturalization edging closer in Ottawa**

The Ottawa/Gatineau group have been working on this in a very smart and planned way for a while, and it looks like that work will pay off, with strong support from at least one city councillor for amending city bylaws to allow residents to turn those patches of resource-intensive lawns at the front of their properties into pollinator-friendly, carbon-capturing natural landscapes instead. Stay tuned - this will be a big win, and a great model for other conservative-minded cities in Ontario (including my own). Way to go!

- **Getting together**

This is truly heartwarming: in-person events are starting to spread, and it's offering a chance for team members to meet each other for the first time, even if they've been working together for a couple of years!

Does your team have any in-person events planned for the spring/summer that are specifically for the team to get to know each other? i.e. a picnic, hike, coffee time? If so, remember that FOK provides up to \$250 per team per year for events and supplies (think: child care or activities for them during an event, bus fare or travel expenses, refreshments, etc.) You can also use the opportunities to recruit new parents (have a banner created, postcards or flyers printed – reach out to Lorna – lorna@forourkids.ca about this!)

We would love to see photos and hear stories of your in-person events!

Last but far from least: Upcoming Events

May 28: Virtual Book Club - if you're a quick reader or have already read *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, there's still time to join the conversation on May 28. Facilitated by FOK's JEDI Accelerator Committee!

June 11: Mid-year check-in - it's time for the second annual meet-us-in-the middle check-in with teams across the For Our Kids network!

How are we doing so far this year at serving the needs of local groups? Are we on the right path to meet [the goals set by the network](#) for 2022? We are looking for ideas and feedback about where the network is at now, where it should focus its energy and resources going forward, and practical ways to make those ideas happen. Please plan to have a member of your team attend this vital conversation.

Don't forget to check the **Events calendar** on the website frequently for updates on events by local teams. If you have events to add and you're not quite sure how to go about doing it, I'm happy to help!

I'm sorry/not sorry for the length of this email - I know it takes time to read and digest, but it's also a tribute to the outright AMAZING things you are all doing. Remember, you can always [access these updates online here](#). Feel free to share with your team members too.

As always, take care out there. Please reach out if there's anything we can do to support you.
Lella