

ecoCaledon to provide tips on 'How to Eat to Save the Planet' through workshop series

By Rob Paul

As the climate crisis continues to be a focal point across the country, provincially, and in Caledon, groups like ecoCaledon have become increasingly important for residents to understand how they can help make a difference for the future.

ecoCaledon is a local not-for-profit organization that has been in Caledon for over 25 years with the main focus being on engaging residents on environmental issues and getting them more involved in sustainability and education.

'We want to help them change their behaviours, not only for them to make choices that are better for themselves but better for the planet,' Lucrezia Chiappetta, ecoCaledon Director of Education.

To help residents learn, ecoCaledon is running an online Food and Climate: How to Eat to Save the Planet workshop. The series is made up of four workshops with the first, 'the Big Picture', taking place February 26, followed by 'From Farm to Fork' on March 26, 'Planetary Health Diet' on April 23, and 'What's the Big Deal About Food Loss and Waste' on May 28.

'Over the last couple of years, we've become involved in this global movement called Project Drawdown,' said Chiappetta. '[It is a] comprehensive list of 100+ solutions that can help stop where we're at now with climate change and actually draw it down from this point on. Within those solutions, we've discovered that eight of the top 20 solutions have to do with food and because actions around food are something we can do at home and quickly we've decided to start this workshop series. Also, within ecoCaledon we've developed a sub-committee focused specifically on food and we call ourselves 'Gratitude for Food Caledon.''

Groups like ecoCaledon and other environmental groups aim to give residents the information they need to make a positive change in an easy to understand and digestible way so that they can take it in and do something to help.

'We've taken out the part of the individual having to go out and do all this research because let's face it, climate change is a huge issue that impacts every aspect of our lives and there are so many groups out there doing things,' said Chiappetta. 'We've tried to make it as easy and fun as possible and we've broken it down into the four parts with the first being the 'Big Picture' to really give participants an overview of how food is linked to climate change. Ideally a lot of our work is more solution-based and this first workshop will probably have a little more discussion around the bad news because you do have to give people the picture of reality. But we'll then introduce the top three solutions that people can work on to help combat climate change. Then the following three workshops will focus on those three solutions in more detail. As of right now we've got about 30 registered participants and registration is still open.'

Knowing everybody has different capacities to get involved, the idea behind the workshop series is to give people the tools to understand that no matter their capacity they can make a difference.

'We're trying to give them actual solutions and actions that they can be taking at home as individuals or as a family and then actions that they can take within their close group of friends and family, actions they can take in the community, and actions that they can take that will impact society on a more global scale,' Chiappetta said. 'If it's something as simple as helping you to reduce your food waste by giving you the top tips to do that, then that's fine. But if you're looking to get more involved in your community and becoming part of an organization like ecoCaledon then that opportunity is there as well. Or maybe you're somebody who only has the time to sign petition and vote with your dollar by making choice at the grocery store, we're giving you those options as well. Everything matters. We all have a role to play in tackling climate change. No one can do everything, but when everyone does something, our actions add up to increase momentum for positive change.'

Aside from the workshop series, ecoCaledon has a few different community programs coming up for people to learn more about

climate change and how they can help.

?We've got a repair café coming up,? Chiappetta said. ?It's a trend that started in Europe around the idea of repairing rather than discarding our items and that can cover anything from clothing to ceramics to electronics. The idea is to bring local ?fixers' in who want to offer their services free of charge and then people can bring in items that need repair. Not only can they get their items repaired but they can actually learn from the fixers as well?that's coming up in the spring. Then in partnership with the Electric Vehicle Society of Caledon, we're planning a day all around sustainable transportation and that will be happening probably sometime in late June. We'll hopefully have electric vehicles on display and be doing some test driving and having conversations around how transportation ties into the whole solution piece.?

For more information on ecoCaledon or to register for the workshops, visit ecocalledon.org/.