

Feeling better and living a happier, healthier life by spending time in nature!

A story of Lucrezia Chiappetta and the outdoors in the Caledon region.



Figure 1. Lucrezia and her family snow shoeing on the Palgrave Trail (Caledon, ON)

For those who work in the environmental field, it often happens that we get overwhelmed by the bad news of the times we live in: we are polluting the earth, water, and air; we are changing the climate; we are cutting down our forests; animal and plant species are going into extinction at an unprecedented rate; and every day there is more of us humans putting pressure on a finite planet with scarce resources. For Lucrezia Chiappetta, as for many others who work in the environmental field, the information that we deal with daily can not only become something to worry about, but this knowledge can also make us feel lonely or isolated, as many people still don't understand the magnitude of the problem we are dealing with and might not be engaging in the solutions that seem so obvious to those of us who work in this field every day.

Lucrezia was feeling a lot of anxiety because of this, and at first looked for medical assistance and medications to fight these negative feelings. But she also tried to start reading good news about the environment, and came across the 30x30 challenge of the David Suzuki Foundation. The 30x30 challenge encourages people to, during the month of May, go out in nature for at least 30 minutes every day, as it is proven that spending time every day in nature has countless health benefits such as: lowering blood pressure, anxiety and stress levels, and boost immunity, while it also helps reduce feelings of anger and depression and increase energy, creativity and even generosity.



Figure 2. Lucrezia and her daughter hiking the Caledon badlands (Caledon, ON)

After taking the challenge, Lucrezia found that she was feeling better. “Just disconnecting from the computer and the daily routine for 30 minutes and going outside helped me reduce my anxiety, sleep better, and explore the area around Caledon where I live. Now I spend every weekend, even in the winter, doing outdoor activities like snowshoeing and I try to encourage friends and family to come on hikes with me and my husband”, she explained. After this challenge, Lucrezia joined EcoCaledon so that she could also have a positive impact on her local environment, and this year she will be growing her own food in a plot at the Albion Hills Community Farm.

As the story of Lucrezia demonstrates, spending time in nature every day can definitely improve your life. So go outside and enjoy the outdoors!

Please look at the links for EcoCaledon, Albion Hills Community Farm, and the 30x30 challenge of the David Suzuki foundation.

<http://30x30.davidsuzuki.org/>

<http://ecocalledon.org/>

<http://www.albionhillscommunityfarm.org/>