

# GentleWays for OurPlanet



## Impact Report 2024-2025

*A Year of Local Environmental Action*

# Table of Contents

---

Founder’s Note and Overview.....	3
About GentleWays.....	4
Projects.....	5
• Humane Ways for Lobsters Petition.....	5
• Awareness and Policy Action for Plant-Forward Meals.....	6
• Repair, Don’t Replace.....	7
• Tree Equity.....	8
• Championing the Green Bin at Multi-Unit Residences.....	9
• Our Ripple Effect – Messages for Environmental Action.....	10
Outreach and Key Updates.....	11
• Podcast Episode on Climate Anxiety.....	11
• Memberships and Community Collaboration.....	11
Closing Reflection.....	12
Get Involved.....	12

# Founder's Note and Overview

---

Dear Friends and Supporters of GentleWays,

This past year has been a quiet affirmation of something we hold deeply at GentleWays: that meaningful change often begins in small, thoughtful shifts—within ourselves, and within our communities.

In 2024–2025, GentleWays for OurPlanet continued to advance practical, evidence-based approaches to environmental action at the local level. Our work remained rooted in a simple premise: meaningful climate action can emerge from informed, accessible, and collective efforts within our communities.



Over the past year, we deepened our engagement across three interconnected areas: public education, community-based initiatives, and policy-oriented advocacy. From advancing awareness of humane treatment for decapod crustaceans, to supporting plant-forward food conversations, to strengthening repair culture and waste diversion practices in Ottawa, our initiatives aimed to translate complex environmental challenges into tangible, everyday actions.

This year also marked the continued growth of our Right-to-Repair initiative, expanded outreach through presentations and community events, and direct engagement with residents in multi-unit housing to support improved organics diversion. Alongside these efforts, we contributed to public dialogue through published articles and collaborative discussions with local and national partners.

While each initiative stands on its own, together they reflect a broader intention: to support individuals and communities in making thoughtful, informed choices that contribute to a gentler environmental footprint.

As we look ahead, GentleWays remains committed to building on this foundation, strengthening partnerships, refining our tools, and continuing to offer grounded pathways for meaningful environmental action. We remain grateful for the many individuals, partners, and volunteers who continue to bring this work to life with care and dedication.

Aida Warah, PhD  
Founder, GentleWays for OurPlanet

# About GentleWays

---

GentleWays for OurPlanet is a volunteer-driven not-for-profit organisation rooted in Ottawa, focused on practical, evidence-based approaches to environmental action. Our work is grounded in the belief that meaningful change can emerge through accessible tools, thoughtful engagement, and collective effort at the local level.

We support individuals and communities in taking informed, sustainable action by offering trustworthy information, concrete initiatives, and opportunities to participate in projects that make a tangible difference. At its core, GentleWays reflects a simple intention: to contribute to a way of living that is more attentive, more collaborative, and gentler on the planet.

## Our Team

---

### Board of Directors

Aida Warah, Founder and Executive Director  
Zivana Pavic, Director  
Teke Rerri, Director

### Environmental Coordinators

Gillian Kresan  
Malvika R Chandnani

### Tree Planting Steering Committee

Ashley Janna  
Carole Nehme  
Colette Corban  
Hashem Hashem  
Mounir Gedeon

### Consultants

Kritika Gupta  
Abhishek Naik, PhD

### Practicum Students

Claire Palys, Carleton University

### Webmaster

Brian Pirie

### Accounting

Elias Abou-Hamad

# Projects

---

## Humane Ways for Lobsters Petition

Advancing animal welfare in a meaningful way requires both scientific grounding and sustained public engagement. This initiative continues to bring forward evidence on decapod sentience while contributing to a broader conversation on humane treatment and legislative responsibility.

Over the past year, this work progressed through research-informed advocacy, public communication, and direct engagement with decision-makers.



Progress this year included:

- A targeted social media campaign highlighting scientific evidence of decapod sentience and welfare considerations.
- Publication of our article, “A Global Awakening: Ontario’s Opportunity to Lead Crustacean Welfare,” in Peace and Environment News, contributing to public awareness and dialogue.
- Direct correspondence with the Solicitor General’s office, including the submission of an evidence brief.
- Engagement with Members of Provincial Parliament, culminating in the formal presentation of our petition at the Legislative Assembly on December 11, 2025.

These efforts contributed to a growing recognition of crustacean welfare and positioned Ontario within an evolving international context. As we prepare this report, a government response is expected in the coming months, in keeping with established procedures. We will continue to engage constructively to support emerging leadership in this area. This work was supported by a generous contribution from a community member, reflecting growing engagement with this issue.

# Projects

---

## Awareness and Policy Action for Plant-Forward Meals

Food systems offer a practical entry point for addressing both environmental and public health challenges. Building on earlier work, including outreach to Ottawa restaurants, supported by a City of Ottawa grant, to encourage the inclusion of more plant-forward menu options, this initiative continued to advance plant-forward awareness through education, communication, and collaboration.

Over the past year, this work focused on strengthening awareness and supporting informed dialogue at the municipal level.

Progress this year included:

- Publication of our article, “Advancing Plant-Based Food Policy and Waste Diversion in Ottawa,” in the CAFES newsletter, outlining practical and locally relevant strategies.
- Development of social media content highlighting the environmental and health benefits of plant-forward diets, grounded in a flexible and non-prescriptive approach.
- Collaborative discussions with local organisations, including Plant-Based Cities Movement, VegOttawa, and the University of Ottawa, to explore coordinated efforts aligned with municipal climate and public health objectives.
- Ongoing exploration of additional engagement opportunities to further support local initiatives in this area.

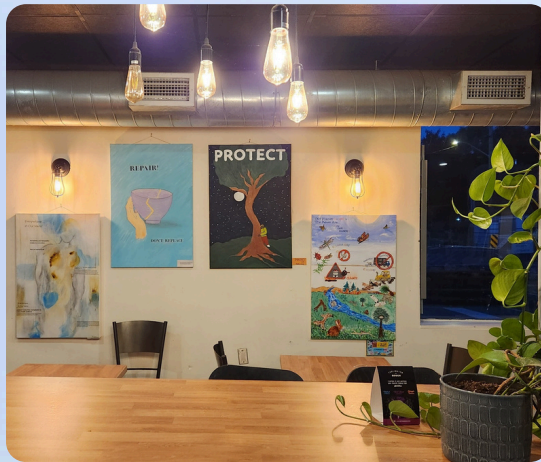
This work contributed to a growing space for informed, balanced conversations about food and sustainability within the local context. As we prepare this report, we are planning a Lunch and Learn session for City of Ottawa councillors and staff, in collaboration with local environmental partners, to continue these conversations.



# Projects

## Repair, Don't Replace

Reducing waste at its source requires more than awareness; it calls for practical alternatives that people can access and trust. Our “Repair, Don't Replace” initiative continues to support a culture of repair in Ottawa through education, community engagement, and the development of practical tools.



*Art Exhibit at Happy Goat Café,  
Sandy Hill, Ottawa*



*Art by Aida Warah, PhD,  
GentleWays for OurPlanet Founder*

Over the past year, this work has translated into both community-facing activities and the creation of lasting resources.

Progress this year included:

- Presentations to two groups—the Canadian Federation of University Women and the Green Reps at the University of Ottawa—engaging approximately 35 participants in dialogue about the global repair movement and its local implications.
- Participation in the Ottawa Environmental Fair, where we facilitated conversations about repair practices and gathered community recommendations on local repair services.
- Continued development of an evolving online Repair and Reuse Directory, designed to connect Ottawa residents with trusted local repair options. The directory remains a growing resource, refined through ongoing outreach and research.
- Exhibition of our original “Repair, Don't Replace” artwork at Happy Goat Café in Sandy Hill, where it contributed to community dialogue around repair and sustainable living.

Together, these efforts helped make repair more visible, more accessible, and more actionable within the local context, while reinforcing a broader shift away from disposability.

# Projects

---

## Tree Equity

Expanding urban tree canopy requires approaches that extend beyond public land and engage the broader community. This initiative explored ways to support more equitable tree distribution in high-density neighbourhoods through collaborative, scalable models.

Over the past year, this work focused on developing and advancing a community-based framework.

Progress this year included:



- Securing a microgrant from Nature Canada to support the development of a tree equity proposal.
- Collaboration with Nature Canada and the Ottawa Centre Community Association to design a community-based planting framework.
- Submission of a grant proposal to the Ottawa Community Foundation, outlining strategies to engage private property owners and local businesses in increasing canopy coverage.
- Articulation of a model that complements municipal efforts while addressing the limits of relying solely on City-owned land.

Although the proposal was not funded, it established a practical and collaborative foundation for advancing urban canopy growth in dense neighbourhoods.

# Projects

---

## Championing the Green Bin at Multi-Unit Residences

Improving waste diversion in multi-residential settings requires both accessible information and direct engagement with residents. This initiative focused on supporting practical behaviour change through community-based outreach.

Over the past year, this work translated into on-site engagement and shared learning.



*Green Bin Day organised by GentleWays volunteer, Malvika R Chandhani*

Progress this year included:

- Hosting an informational kiosk in a multi-unit residential complex in May 2025, focused on improving organics-sorting practices.
- Use of visual guides and discussion-based outreach to explain the link between landfill emissions and climate change.
- Addressing common barriers such as odour and pests through practical, resident-informed solutions.
- Engagement with approximately 30 residents, who contributed suggestions to improve participation within their building.

This initiative strengthened awareness of waste diversion as a climate action tool while supporting peer-to-peer learning within the community.

# Projects

---

## Our Ripple Effect – Messages for Environmental Action

Encouraging sustained environmental action often begins with small, accessible shifts in daily behaviour. This initiative continued to develop short-form content designed to support individuals in taking meaningful steps without overwhelm.

Over the past year, this work focused on communication that balances clarity, realism, and encouragement.

Progress this year included:

- Creation of short-form social media posts and videos promoting everyday environmental actions.
- Messaging designed to balance urgency with optimism, emphasizing the value of small, consistent choices.
- Development of content that supports individuals in engaging with environmental issues in a grounded and manageable way.

This initiative reflects our broader commitment to fostering steady, collective impact through practical and approachable communication.



# Outreach and Key Updates

## Podcast Episode on Climate Anxiety

Addressing the psychological dimensions of climate change is an essential part of supporting meaningful engagement. This contribution brought attention to eco-anxiety while offering grounded ways to respond to it.

Over the past year, this work took the form of a public conversation.

Highlights included:

- Appearance by GentleWays founder Dr. Aida Warah on the University of Ottawa's podcast Let's Talk Sustainability-Tea.
- Discussion about how climate anxiety manifests in daily life and how it can be acknowledged without overwhelm.
- Exploration of ways to channel concern into constructive, grounded action.
- Availability of the episode in both English and French on Spotify.

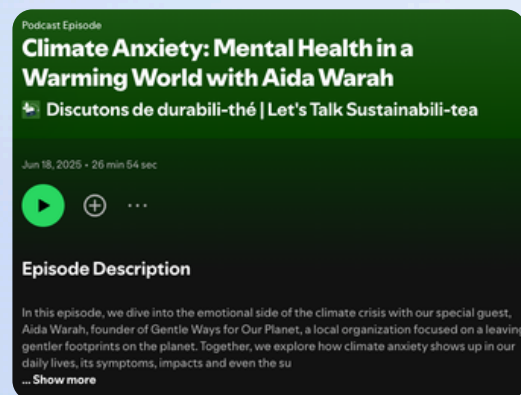
This contribution connected psychological insight with practical pathways for engaging with environmental challenges.

## Memberships and Community Collaboration

GentleWays remained an active member of Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability (CAFES) and continued collaborating with local partners to strengthen coordinated climate action in Ottawa.

Over the past year, this included ongoing participation in shared initiatives and dialogue with community organisations, as well as the welcoming of new board members and volunteers whose expertise supports the continuity and growth of our work.

These relationships continue to strengthen the collective capacity for thoughtful, locally grounded environmental action.



# Closing Reflection

---

This year's work has been made possible through the time, care, and commitment of many individuals who share a common belief in thoughtful, grounded environmental action.

We are deeply grateful to our volunteers, collaborators, and community partners who contributed their expertise, energy, and trust. Whether through research, outreach, conversations, or quiet support behind the scenes, each contribution has helped move this work forward in meaningful ways.

GentleWays remains a volunteer-driven initiative, sustained by a shared commitment to practical and respectful approaches to environmental change. As we continue, we do so with appreciation for what has been built together, and with openness to the collaborations and opportunities that lie ahead.

# Get Involved

---

Volunteer by filling out the [form](#)

Donate via our [website](#)

Write to us at [info@gentleways.org](mailto:info@gentleways.org)

Connect with us on social media and share the message

