

Healthy Homes Calgary



The purpose of the Healthy Homes Calgary project is to empower a selection of Calgary families to:

1. make their living environment healthier; and
2. reduce the ecological impact of their home.

These changes will benefit the local community and the hands-on knowledge gained by these households can be shared with friends, family, and colleagues. Specifically the households:

- learn what a “healthy home is”;
- gain an understanding of the range of actions they can take, and the associated costs, level of effort, and environmental / health benefits;
- start by making a few positive changes immediately and then encouraged to continue over time to make more changes, with greater cumulative impact, with on-going support from Green Calgary staff; and
- become increasingly aware of the positive long-term impact of their actions.

Of the 385 homes enrolled in the program, 338 received an (initial) 2-hour visit to assess the “health” of the home. The households were introduced to the healthy home concept and provided with education pertaining to energy and water conservation, indoor air quality, and waste reduction.

Multiple environmental tools were installed during these initial visits, including water saving devices and compact fluorescent lights. Utility bills were examined to determine baseline use and to inform participants of average use in Calgary.

164 second (follow-up) 1 to 2-hour home visits have been conducted. During the second visit, Green Calgary staff and volunteers worked with the participants to assess progress and to provide further education relating to the topics covered in the initial visit. Additional environmental tools such as backyard composters and rain barrels were introduced at this stage and participants were taken through the City of Calgary’s Ecological Footprint Calculator.

Between first and second visits, participants were encouraged to watch two videos – “The Story of Stuff” and a Ted Lecture entitled “What’s wrong with what we eat?” These videos serve as an introduction to the issues of overconsumption and sustainable food choices and set the stage for a discussion of the topics. Participating households were given commitment cards to fill in following the second visit. Commitments ranged from eating less meat to getting a home energy audit to cutting energy use by 25%.

Also as part of this investment, Green Calgary has been working with the Alberta Real Estate Association (AREA) to create education opportunities for REALTORS® on environmental health of homes.