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## Stella Bowles: #Rising Youth protecting waterways in Nova Scotia

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Stella Bowles and I'm 14 years old. I'm a grade 9 student at Centre Scolaire de la Rive Sud, in Bridgewater Nova Scotia. I love to travel and within the last year I have been to many different places in Canada, as well as Ecuador and Sweden. I also play hockey and volleyball.



How did you hear about #RisingYouth, and what inspired you to apply?

I heard about Rising Youth online and thought it would be a great opportunity to get funding to create water testing kits for youth in my province.

Can you explain what your project is, how you came up with it, and the purpose of it?



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When I was 11, I found out about straight pipes. It's a pipe that runs from a home directly into a waterway. So, when you flush your toilet, or do laundry, all the water and whatever else is in it, goes directly into the waterway. I was disgusted to find out this was happening in my own river and I had a lot of questions. I started testing my river and I was horrified to find out the water was very polluted with fecal matter. So, I posted a giant sign on my wharf warning people, "This River is Contaminated with Fecal Bacteria" and I started a Facebook page. I quickly got the attention of many people and after three years of making my testing results public, three levels of government came together and there is now a \$15.7 million-dollar program started to rid the LaHave River of illegal straight pipes by 2023.

Now, I am showing other youth in NS how to test their waterways. I created testing kits because I think it's important for youth to realize they do have a voice and the power to create change. I also want kids to realize science can be fun and not just a textbook in a classroom.

**What has the reaction to your project been in your community?**

I have had overwhelming support from my community. People continue to encourage me to keep inspiring youth to become environmental advocates to help kids discover that they can make a difference.

**Why do you think it is important for youth to be engaged in community service initiatives like #RisingYouth?**

Overall, I think my generation has to step up and be the change. We are being left with a disaster and frankly, our parents and grandparents have not done enough to help our environment. I think the tides are turning and I am happy to be part of this change.

**If youth are interested in applying for a Rising Youth Community Service Grant but don't know where to start, where do you suggest they find project ideas?**

I think it is important for youth to find a cause that they truly care about. Also, it's important to talk to adults and find a mentor who is knowledgeable and able to teach you and guide you in the process. We learn best from elders. With their knowledge and the social media savvy of youth, the opportunities are endless.

**What have been some of the highs and lows of getting your project off the ground?**

It is so great to train interested youth. I learned that working with a small group of kids who want to learn about science and care about their waterway, with a science mentor works best. I had challenges with large groups. I learned a lot through my training and continue to do throughout the project.

**Any final advice or suggestions for youth who are considering applying?**

Go for it! I think my generation needs to get involved in our communities and help create positive change. There are a lot of youth with great ideas and a lot of adults ready to help.

**Apply now with your community project:**

**[WWW.RISINGYOUTH.CA](http://WWW.RISINGYOUTH.CA)**

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## Emily VanToever: #Rising Youth promoting environmental stewardship in PEI



### Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I'm a resident of Stanhope, PEI and a graduate of the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus. I currently work as a construction electrician. I feel very lucky to live just outside of a national park and greatly value the gorgeous environmental resources I am surrounded by.

### How did you hear about #RisingYouth, and what inspired you to apply?

I heard about Rising Youth through a friend that shared the application page via Facebook. I wanted to do something to benefit the Covehead and Brackley Bay Watershed, which is the area I live in.

### Can you explain what your project is, how you came up with it, and the purpose of it?

I created an education series about Covehead and Brackley Bay to help promote environmental stewardship in my community. I used data collected from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the local watershed group, *Friends of Covehead and Brackley Bay Watershed* to develop the series.

### What has the reaction to your project been in your community?

Largely positive. I believe the sessions I organized that catered to smaller children were the most impactful.

### Why do you think it is important for youth to be engaged in community service initiatives like #RisingYouth?

It's important to engage in service projects because it's a positive way to foster solidarity and good will in our communities.

### If youth are interested in applying for a Rising Youth Community Service Grant but don't know where to start, where do you suggest they find project ideas?

I suggest they either identify a need within the community, or try to identify something about their community that they are specifically interested in.

### What have been some of the highs and lows of getting your project off the ground?

The high of the project was engaging with children about a topic that I'm passionate about, in a way that was impactful to them. I found it a bit discouraging that I didn't get the same energy back from adults as I did with youth, but then again, I found it harder to target and identify adult audiences.

### Any final advice or suggestions for youth who are considering applying?

I would just like to encourage anyone considering a service project to apply.

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