



Photo by Mark Tarnovetsky

Kirk Fleming, the Director of Facility Services, supervises the contract between Loyalist College and the company who maintains the green wall located in Link Lounge at Loyalist College.

Going green costs college green

Facility services department takes over the expenses of living wall

By Mark Tarnovetsky

The cost of going green is about to set in. The responsibility of maintaining the living wall, a section of wall in the Link Lounge of Loyalist College made entirely of green plants, is to be transferred to the facility services department by the end of March.

A living, or "green" wall, is a self-sufficient vertical garden that uses a recycled

water support system.

The living wall's upkeep is covered under a warranty in a contract that expires at the end of March, after which the facilities department at Loyalist will take full responsibility. Maintenance will include a monthly routine of inspection of the plants and water filtration system.

The living wall was built during the construction of the Link Lounge in April of last year, connecting Loyalist College's main building with the new Sustainable Skills, Technology and Life Sciences Centre.

The cost of the living wall amounted to \$85,000. "Loyalist College students' ancillary fees

were used for this project," Loyalist Student Government business manager Julie Cooper confirmed.

Full-time students are required to pay an ancillary fee of \$969. Winter registration students' pay \$484.50, and summer students \$261.50. The fee is used for various projects, not only the living wall.

"There is always a cost concern for something new," Kirk Fleming admitted.

Fleming, the director of facility services at Loyalist, has estimated annual maintenance costs to reach \$1,800.

Over 300 individual plants make up the wall, featuring 15 different species. Fans have been installed inside the wall

so the roots have enough air circulation.

Fleming believes the living wall "adds to the atmosphere" of the Link Lounge.

Despite the living wall's pleasing esthetics, the system is not connected to Loyalist College's HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system. Some living walls work in conjunction with a building's air conditioning system, lowering costs, however, Loyalist College's living wall is cosmetic only.

"If you just put a bunch of plants in your home you're going to get the same results as the wall. It just saves us space and everything is in one area to maintain," Fleming said.

Queen's University helps with high school transition

Grade 7 students with learning disabilities to get updated assessment

By Samantha Cantelon

Queen's University is conducting a program for local students in Grade 7 with learning disabilities, which helps them make a successful transition to secondary school and beyond.

Participating schools in Belleville are St. Joseph Catholic School and St. Michael Catholic School.

Claire Notman, success co-ordinator at Queen's University said, "we hope to reach as many kids in need as we can to help make transitioning to high school easier."

"The Grade 8 transitions program gives children with reading or writing learning disabilities the chance to have an updated psychoeducational assessment," said Notman.

A psychoeducational assessment tests the student's intellectual achievements through math, writing and reading. From these test results, teachers will be able to understand where the students are having problems, and the school will be able to create an appropriate individual education plan for the child's success into high school and higher education.

Melanie Clair, a resource teacher at St. Michael Catholic School in Belleville said, "after elementary school, it is common for learning disabilities to affect students' reading and writing."

This is St. Michael's second year with students participating in the Queen's program.

"It helps the students keep on track," Clair said.

According to Statistics Canada, 44 per cent or 68,000 of all Canadian children reporting disabilities live in Ontario.

In the most recent study of Canadian children between five and 14 years old, a total of 155,000 had some form of activity limitation. Out of those 155,000 children with disabilities, 38 per cent are receiving special education services. Approximately 39 per cent of parents indicated that they could not access special education services because these services were not available locally.

The program takes around 32 students and usually starts in September.

"We try to see as many students as we can before the end of the year," said Notman.

All of the testing is done at Queen's in Kingston in the regional assessment and resource centre.

"I know schools do all they can to help students transition from elementary to secondary school," said Notman. "As more and more students are diagnosed with learning disabilities and other exceptionalities, the job becomes much bigger and I know special education and student support teachers are overloaded already. I do feel there needs to be more support for these students and their parents. In cooperation with the school boards we are trying to help close that gap."

Healing and education objectives of team

Alternatives for Women dedicated to women dealing with violence

By Melissa Di Nardo

One-in-four women are assaulted by their partners, reports Alternatives for Women in Prince Edward County.

Alternatives for Women is dedicated to providing a safe and confidential place with services geared towards ending violence against women and healing those who survive.

"Every week, two women are killed by their intimate partners," reports Alternatives in one of their pamphlets.

Surviving women are very empowering, full of healing. Healing is the main objective for executive director Rahno Godfrey.

Godfrey and her team go into the community and help educate the public and younger generations about the effects that abuse has.

The team also educates women by

telling them where they can receive safe and confidential help and legal advice.

Godfrey is very familiar with the area since she has been working in the area for over a decade at Three Oaks shelter in Belleville.

"We do safety planning with every woman who walks through that door," said Godfrey. This is one of the first steps for survivors who try and reach out for help.

"When you find the courage to step out of the darkness, you will either be given a solid foundation to stand on or wings to fly," advised Godfrey to all women who are dealing with domestic abuse in silence.

Asked what were red flags of abuse and how to help women from being abused, Godfrey said.

"What might you see now is constant text messaging, checking up on you. Where are you? Who you talking to? Who are you with? So and so saw you!"

"Maybe she is wearing long sleeves and inappropriate clothing in warm weather. Maybe you invite her out with all the girls from school all the time and she is like 'I

can't go. I got to get going.' Her eyes are darting, she is very nervous and anxious and she has to get going. She has to check this text, she just has to get back to him. You know? Those are some things you might want to go 'Hmm. What's going on there?'"

"Is it that you just don't like me? Or is there something else going on?"

It always starts out with looks and gestures but quickly progresses," explained Godfrey.

"He moves quick and he occupies all your time, starts putting your friends down. He doesn't want you going out. He wants you to chose him over your friends and family and he accuses you of choosing them over him."

"Women are not property," said Godfrey as a message to aggressors who don't see the harm in their actions.

One of the first steps to awareness is communication and to know that you do have a choice, a choice to be safe.

"The reason it continues in silence is because people don't talk about it. The reason that it happens is because people don't

talk about it," said Deborah Raymond, a therapist at the sexual assault centre in Belleville.

Raymond, who is a group facilitator for the sexual assault centre, said the centre is geared towards healing the survivor -- both male and female.

"We help them to remove some of that distortion and bring in healthier thoughts about themselves. We offer that to them, but they have to do the work on their own."

Helping a survivor to see what kind of woman she can become is a beautiful rebirth to witness. "Speak up because you matter and you deserve to live a life free of violence," said Raymond.

You can reach the Alternatives for Women centre at (613) 476-4435 and speak to Rahno Godfrey about what your options are or even how to become more involved in saving someone who could be suffering in silence.

There is also the 24-hour crisis line available in case of an emergency at (613) 476-2787.

Firefighting team trains to help firefighters

Group dedicated to search and rescue of downed firefighters in collapsed buildings

By Tophier Seguin

Belleville firefighters finished off their new Rapid Intervention Team training at the former Quinte Exhibition grounds Wednesday.

The team is a group of firefighters who are solely dedicated to the search and rescue of other firefighters in distress, which may mean rescuing a downed firefighter in a collapsing building.

John Lake, who was in charge of the operation, said that it was about time the department got a firefighter specialized course going, adding that rescuing a firefighter is much different from rescuing civilians, and on average it takes 12 firefighters to rescue a single down firefighter.

"We always had a RIT team, but I finally went to take a course specializing in it and it was a real eye-opener. Not only did we learn more about saving each other's lives, but we also learned about building construction, which helps when it's time to make a wall into a doorway," said Lake.

The National Fire Protection Association defines RIT as "two or more firefighters assigned outside the hazard area at an interior structure fore to assist or rescue at an emergency operation."

'Today was an evolution. We had smoke machines to simulate real smoke you would see at any given fire, and a mock building to train in. We had to first find our way through the maze and then drag our buddy out.'

firefighter Mich Lacombe

The concept of RITs isn't something new. Teams have been around for 10 to 15 years in the United States but have only begun to enter the Canadian fire service the last five years.

Making the training as realistic as possible was very important to the team. They filled the whole room with smoke and constructed a maze for the firefighters to find their way through.

"Today was an evolution. We had smoke machines to simulate real smoke you would see at any given fire, and a mock building to train in. We had to first find our way through the maze and then drag our buddy out," said firefighter Mich Lacombe.

This was the fourth and final team participating in the training.

"Everything went pretty much as expected. We went through a few different scenarios and it all worked out well," said Lake.



Photo by Tophier Seguin

Just finishing off the final day of the new Rapid Intervention Team training, Belleville firefighter Mich Lacombe believes that it was a huge success.