



Students help make roof 'green'

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Students at Froebel Education Centre in Erindale helped design a green roof for their school that captures rainwater and reuses the run-off.

As part of a pilot roof project for schools in Mississauga led by Shidan Murphy, a University of Toronto Mississauga PhD candidate for the department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, the education centre children, who range from age 3 to Grade 8, also selected plants, sowed seeds and helped build the structure to grow seedlings. Murphy and volunteers from UTM's Let's Talk Science Partnership Program — which promotes science literacy through leadership, innovative educational programs, research and advocacy — visited the school to help the students.

Heleni Sahlas, a longtime educator at the private school, said the students really enjoyed the hands-on experience.

"The children did everything. They felt the seeds and the soil. They chose the plants.

They designed the roof. They were totally involved and enthusiastic," she said. "These are the ones who will save the environment for all of us —children who do this from when they are young."

The students will be transferring the plants to the customized student-designed green roof later this spring. They'll also be using soil from the worm composter that they have been cultivating since the fall to nurture the growth of plants on the roof.

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Green thumbs. UTM PhD candidate for the department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Shidan Murphy helps students from the Froebel Education Centre design a green roof for their school that captures rainwater and reuses the run-off. *Photo supplied*

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