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## Fabulous Joan...

July 19, 2011 | Author *Deb Rankine*



What started off as an annual pilgrimage to [Windfields Community Gardens](#) in north Oshawa ended up being an incredible two-hour conversation with its garden guru, Joan Kerr, at her stunningly beautiful newly landscaped home garden.

Joan is a force to be reckoned with; a five-foot-nothing dynamo who makes everyone she comes into contact with want to be a better person. Trust me when I say, Jack Nicholson has nothing on this lady.

We started talking about her work at Windfield's (did you know she petitioned and GOT a bus stop right outside the garden gate so no one in the community sans wheels would be plotless?) and about its fate now that the 407 is slated to go right through it. Joan tells me the Ministry of Transportation has promised her a relocation site on the Windfield lands or a new parcel of land when the time comes to bulldoze the existing community garden.

Whew!

Says Joan, "Moving forward we will have on-site greenhouses that will be utilized to teach sustainability practices, offer cooking and canning classes [cooking with weeds will no doubt be one of them!] and give participants the option to garden 24/7."

Joan also hopes that The Reel Food Project's five-year plan will cultivate 300 now-learned community gardeners to take their skillset on the road and set up home farms that include flower and vegetable gardens, fruit trees and free range chickens. And that, says Joan, is just the beginning!

The conversation took a turn to HOLY COW, THAT'S WONDERFUL NEWS when she casually mentioned that the "Fabulous Joan" green series will be airing on [Rogers TV \(DURHAM\)](#) in September. Say's Joan, "I queried Rogers with an idea for a sustainability show and they asked me to host it! At first I said no, I wasn't a TV person but the producer said I was a perfect choice to host it."

Fabo Joan, indeed!

Joan continues, "My philosophy is if we talk about sustainability and about the little ways that people can get involved then they will want to do more."

A case in point is Joan's passion for giving printed matter a second life. She takes newspapers and other paper recyclables, shreds them, and presses them with dried flower petals, bits of

threads from her sewing projects, and what have yous, and screens them into beautiful writing papers.

Now that's sustainability.

Tags: community gardens, cooking lessons, Durham Farm Fresh, Durham Region, family, free range chickens, highway 407, home farming, homemade writing paper, infrastructure, Jack Nicholson, Joan Kerr, local food procurement, Ministry of Transportation, Ontario, recycling, Rogers TV, sustainablily, The Fabulous Joan Show, The Reel Food Project, Windfields Community Garden