

Be the Change

An inspiring documentary about people living lightly — and loving it



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MEDIA ADVISORY

Don't miss the world premiere of

BE THE CHANGE
Friday, June 20
7 p.m.
Bell Theatre, Minto Centre
Carleton University

Be the Change is the first film from David Chernushenko and the Living Lightly Project.

This upbeat documentary explores the motivations for, and the challenges and rewards of, trying to live more lightly. It is a "100-kilometre film" shot entirely in the Ottawa region.

For more information, visit **www.livinglightly.ca/film** or call 613-730-0870.

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Media kit and images available online at www.livinglightly.ca/media.

For interviews and other requests, and to RSVP, please contact David Chernushenko at david@livinglightly.ca or 613-730-0870.

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INTRODUCTION

Be the Change is an upbeat documentary that makes stars out of ordinary people who are trying to live more sustainably. In the first film from the Living Lightly Project, David Chernushenko looks at what motivates these local heroes and reveals the challenges and rewards of trying to live more lightly. It is a celebration of the human spirit.

This is a “100-kilometre film” – with all scenes filmed within a 100-km radius of David’s Ottawa home.

SYNOPSIS

Be the Change is a point-of-view documentary that takes you on a journey with producer/director and on-camera narrator David Chernushenko as he explores why some people choose to live lightly, or more sustainably, and what it will take to get everybody else on board.

Avoiding both preaching and scare tactics, **Be the Change** attempts to answer such questions as: What does living lightly look like? Who is doing it? What do they get out of it? Does it hurt? Is it enough? Can all of us give it a try?

The film takes us on a tour of greater Ottawa. From David’s urban home out to the country and back to the houses and shops of the city. He visits the Arbour Environmental Shoppe, the Irving Greenberg Theatre and the Currents “green condo” building, city neighbours, village dwellers and urban gardeners.

David’s Old Ottawa South (OOS) neighbourhood, its landmarks and residents feature prominently in the film. Viewers meet OOS residents Randi Cherry and Robert D’Aoust, the Otesha Project’s “hopeful high school hooligans” on Riverdale, and some residents of the Terra Firma housing community just over the border in Old Ottawa East.

“Making a 100-km film is consistent with our environmental commitment,” David explains. “The local production also nicely illustrates our main point: You do not have to look far to find inspiring people and interesting stories. Every community is full of local heroes, living lightly and modestly.”

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CAST

The cast — or subjects, as they're often called in documentaries — is large and diverse. Here is a cross-section of the people who appear as themselves in **Be the Change**.

Fran Doy loves gardening. The bigger the garden, the better. But what to do when you live in Alta Vista, a community with green lawns and neighbours concerned about property values? Just how far can you go with your love of urban food production without ruffling people's feathers? As Fran shows, you can go a very long way indeed, and even get the neighbours involved.

Hugh and Jo-Ann Robertson are famous in Ottawa's eco-conscious circles. The story of how they went a full year without even filling a full bag of garbage is the stuff of legend. Hugh is also known for his work to educate people citywide about the risks of climate change and the practical steps we can all take to cut energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Hugh and Jo-Ann are also active members of the Cercle Glenviro Circle, a true community initiative.

Lori Gadzala and Douglas Frosst, along with their children, are living the good life in the village of Manotick. Their shift from awareness to action was gradual, but has evolved into a deliberate and public effort. Protecting the natural shoreline along their property on the banks of the Rideau River seemed logical to them. Now they are exploring other ways, big and small, to live more lightly.

Franklin Holtforster is a man — a businessman — with a mission. The construction industry consumes vast amounts of resources, and inefficient buildings are becoming more and more expensive to operate. So Franklin is reshaping his company, which manages building projects, to be at the forefront of the shift to green building. His staff finds this approach exciting and rewarding, and more and more clients are seeing it as the way of the future.

Thomas Levy found his way into the film after reading about the Living Lightly Project and contacting David Chernushenko. Thomas, a professional engineer, wanted to tell his story about building an energy-efficient, off-grid home, but to make it clear that this was more an act of common sense than of wild-eyed activism. He is wary of all the stereotypes that come with making such a move.

CAST – Cont'd

Kate Heartfield is a newspaper columnist and member of the *Ottawa Citizen's* editorial board. She surprised a few people when she and her husband Brent gave up their very livable downtown community and moved to the country. These avid walkers and bus riders love their newfound freedom and space, but are fully aware of the trade-offs that come with car-dependent country living.

Denis Bouillon is one of those people who provide inspiration without really setting out to do so. He is a resident of the Terra Firma Co-Housing Community and an avid cyclist, in all weather. His neighbours cite him as an example of how we can be inspired by the action and determination of others. Denis cycles in blizzards because he likes it. All the better if that makes him a useful role model.

The Otesha Project: Otesha means “reason to dream” in Swahili, and The Otesha Project takes a spirited and positive approach to promoting sustainable living. The young people involved in this very hands-on group put a great emphasis on interactive education, on engaging citizens, especially youth, and on making living lightly something fun and rewarding that can be shared with others.

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PRODUCTION TEAM

David Chernushenko – *Producer and Director*

David Chernushenko is a sustainability advocate who explores and communicates ways to create healthy, abundant livelihoods for all citizens. He has two decades of experience working in the field of sustainable development, as a public servant, consultant and entrepreneur, author, political candidate and photographer. David currently makes his living as a professional speaker and commentator on environmental, social and economic issues. He is a member of Canada's National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy.

Be the Change is David's first feature-length documentary film. He previously produced a series of Energy Tips Video Clips, a popular source of practical advice freely available on the Internet.

For more information about David Chernushenko, visit www.davidc.ca.

Ned Dickens – *Screenwriter*

Ned Dickens is about to become best known for his seven-play cycle *City of Wine*. A playwright, kids' book author and unorthodox educator based in Kingston, Ont., Ned contributed his words, ideas and wealth of experience in public dialogue and social change initiatives to **Be the Change**, and continues to be a key contributor to the Living Lightly Project.

James Greatrex – *Editor*

James Greatrex is a new media artist and filmmaker. His films have been screened at national film festivals, contemporary art galleries and video cooperatives. He has worked with/for the National Film Board (NFB), The Summer Institute of Film and Television, The Canadian Screen Training Centre, The National Research Council and the Queen's University Film Department. Some of his experimental documentary work has been broadcast on Canadian and US television. He is a member of the SAW video production co-op in Ottawa.

PRODUCTION TEAM – Cont'd

Anouk Hoedeman – Associate Producer

Anouk Hoedeman is a writer, editor and communications adviser based in Ottawa. Anouk is a key contributor to the project's concept and implementation, and a priceless assistant to David Chernushenko on many of his projects.

Kenneth Berall – Executive Producer

Kenneth Berall is the principal financial partner supporting the Living Lightly Project. He is a businessman with a background in sportswear manufacturing. His concern for the health of our environment led him to support the initial development of the Living Lightly Project. He is also a partner in the start-up nanotechnology company Early Warning Inc.

Stan Boyle

Stan Boyle is a costume maker by day and with whatever time is left over devotes himself to helping other people make videos. He is a key member of the production team, helping with sound, lighting and editing of short videos for the Living Lightly Project Web site.

Paul Wm. Boyle

Paul Boyle is a young, enthusiastic cameraman and filmmaker. Paul produced several films while still in high school and is currently studying video production at Algonquin College. Paul also assists with lighting and the editing of short videos for the Living Lightly Project Web site.

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ABOUT THE LIVING LIGHTLY PROJECT

***Be the Change** is the first full-length film produced as part of the Living Lightly Project. Created by sustainability advocate David Chernushenko and a team of volunteers and dedicated supporters, the Project is described here in David's words:*

We are constantly bombarded by stark and sometimes apocalyptic warnings about climate change, ecological degradation, human suffering and social upheaval. While these stories are, unfortunately, far too true, they are also, fortunately, only one side of the story. What is too often missing from the news, the images and the information we receive, is the inspiring, hopeful and equally true stories of positive change.

The world, like our community, is full of people who are making a difference and leading by example. We are, literally, surrounded by such "local heroes." Ordinary folk doing extraordinary things to solve social and environmental problems. Their motivation tends not to be wealth or fame; rather, they do what they do because it is satisfying, uplifting and rewarding in the truest and fullest sense of the word.

Wouldn't it be nice to hear more about these people, and to learn more about what they do, and why? Don't you think we could be building better, healthier, more supportive communities if we were to use our local heroes as role models, and share their solutions more widely? I think we could, and that's why I launched the Living Lightly Project.

Living lightly means seeking a personally fulfilling and enriching way of life that makes a positive impact on our environment, our community and society, and inspires others to want to join us. It is a pursuit, a philosophy or maybe even a quest. It is a social movement with a very individual approach, and as such can be very public and communal, or very private and personal.

Living lightly is about choosing to embrace a way of life that is exciting, challenging, rewarding, humbling, and as full of mistakes and dilemmas as it is full of achievements and certainty.

By living lightly, we choose to be active participants in finding and sharing solutions to today and tomorrow's environmental, social and economic challenges, without being judgmental or sanctimonious. By living lightly, we choose to adopt a positive, generous approach to seeking solutions and to sharing them with others, and to do so with humility.

Living lightly embraces the fact that we have a moral and practical obligation to reduce our personal impact on the planet, to consume fewer resources, to generate less waste and to achieve a better balance between our needs and those of the natural world. But more than that, Living Lightly is a proclamation that we can actually achieve a **better** quality of life in the process.

Living lightly is a way to attain richer, more meaningful lives. It's a means to build stronger and healthier communities and economies. It's a way to improve security and boost resilience.

The Project website (livinglightly.ca) is the hub for a local and global community, to view and share solutions and stories of living lightly, in the form of videos, photos, art and written material.

The LLP aims to inspire a global community of citizens to take practical action to build sustainable communities and livelihoods. We do that by interviewing and then showcasing on video people who are already on the road to "living lightly", telling their stories and sharing their knowledge and passion. The videos show that viable and exciting alternatives exist to typical current practices (of individuals, groups and companies), and aim to inspire people to adopt some of these or create their own versions.

I have found that when you bring practical optimists together, they can accomplish even more, and inspire others.

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FILMING LIGHTLY – OUR GREEN COMMITMENT

A great deal of effort went into ensuring that **Be the Change** was made “lightly”:

- We shot the entire film within 100 km of the city of Ottawa
- The crew walked, cycled, carpoled or took the bus wherever possible
- We used rechargeable batteries most of the time, and disposed of non-recyclable ones safely
- Most crew meals were eaten at locally-owned restaurants/cafes, often organic, sometimes vegetarian
- We printed scripts and other documents on recycled paper, usually on the reverse side of a previously-used sheet
- David’s home production office is solar-powered
- We rode the train or bus for most inter-city travel (the editor and screenwriter live in Kingston)
- We made a donation to the Guatemala Stove Project (www.guatemalastoveproject.org) to offset our estimated greenhouse gas emissions from travel and non-renewable electricity use
- All effort will be made to package the DVD using materials that can be truly and locally recycled
- Any travel related to promoting the film, attending festivals or hosting public screenings will use the same “sustainable transportation hierarchy” followed in the making of the film:
 1. Active transport (walk, cycle)
 2. Public transit
 3. Carpooling
 4. Car – employing efficient driving habits and minimal idling
 5. Airplane – emissions to be offset by contributions to legitimate carbon offsetting organizations/projects