



Bring Your  
Own Bottle

2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

# **BRING YOUR OWN BOTTLE CAMPAIGN**

## Introduction

This annual report serves as the recap of the Bring Your Own Bottle campaign's first year in operation. Also known as BYOB, this campaign was put formally into motion by a Working Group of individuals from across the McMaster University community who participated voluntarily towards a common mission: *creating a culture of reuse on campus through refilling water bottles.*

## Previous Work

Previous work has been done on the issue of single-use water bottles on campus prior to BYOB and created a strong foundation to enable the campaign to exist. In 2020, student researchers investigated the effectiveness of bottle bans and ultimately recommended that a ban was not the best strategy for change.<sup>1</sup> Following this, a 2021 McMaster Residence Life survey showed that 80% of student residents purchased single-use water bottles regularly.<sup>2</sup> In response, Facility Services retrofitted Elkay filtered water spigots into all residence common rooms over the summer of 2021.

## Establishment of the Working Group & Strategy

The BYOB Working Group had its first meeting in January 2022. At this time the Group consisted of one student and eight members from different campus departments: Environmental &

Occupational Health Support Services, Facility Services, Hospitality, Residence Life, Communications, The McMaster Okanagan Committee, and The Academic Sustainability Programs Office. Throughout 2022, membership shifted as some stepped back and others joined in. The collaboration of this Group is a strength as different perspectives have made strategizing more comprehensive.

The beginning stages involved discussion on the exact goals of the Group and a timeline. Working off of student research, it was established that there was a communication gap between water availability on campus and student perceptions. Student responses called for more convenient refill access and reflected some mistrust in water quality on campus.<sup>1</sup>

The primary goal of the Group thus evolved into tackling “phase one” of the issue of single-use bottles on campus via a communication campaign with a focus on incoming resident students. This involved multiple actions taken by the Group which are described in the following sections.

## Governance

The Group reports to The McMaster Okanagan Committee (MOC) and The McMaster Sustainability Advisory Committee. The MOC administrative team manages the project activities and campaign promotion. A dedicated

project support assistant on the admin team facilitates these operations.

## Work Done & Achievements

To achieve the goal of communication with students, a variety of materials were created by the BYOB Group. Some items are residence specific to achieve the aspect of the goal related to incoming students while others have a wider reach. BYOB also participated in outreach events and facilitated the installation of four new water refill stations.

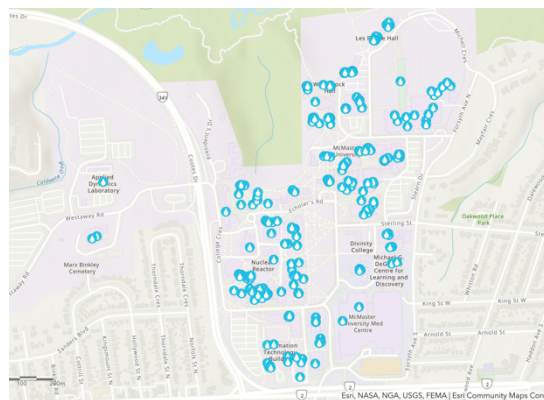
A campaign website was one of the first communication pieces created, hosted on the broader MOC website, this served as a landing spot for detailed information on the campaign, its mission, its importance, and FAQs. Clear and transparent communication was the focus for this website. The website has been kept up to date to reflect the current and completed projects of BYOB.

The official logo (*see below*) to identify the campaign was created by the Group in collaboration with Media Production Services (MPS).



*BYOB campaign logo*

There are around 200 Elkay water refill stations across campus, and it was a priority that students are aware of this availability, so an interactive map (*see below*) was created using ArcGIS and is now hosted on the website. Users can go to the map and find the location of any refill station on campus. At the time of this report, the map has had around



*Image of BYOB interactive map showing icons for all refill stations on campus*

750 visitors since its launch.

To accompany the refill stations, new signage was created by the Group in collaboration with MPS and installed at all locations. Plexiglass signage was installed above wall unit stations (*see right*). Wall decals were placed by the filtered spigots in residence common rooms. Both feature the logo for easy identification of refill locations.



*Water refill station (wall unit) with new BYOB signage*

A Daily News article was written about the official launch of the campaign in April 2022.<sup>3</sup>

Information about BYOB was communicated to incoming residence students and their parents in a newsletter email by Residence Life. The message directed them to the website with a reminder to “bring your own bottle to campus”.

Promotional bookmarks and stickers were created to handout at outreach events to spread the message.

BYOB had a booth at the Welcome Week Learning Fair on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Staff interacted with upwards of 200 incoming first-year students and gave away 10 refillable bottles to those who participated in a fun and educational activity related to BYOB. Bookmarks and stickers were also handed out.

Digital signage was created and featured across campus with the website information on screens in the Student Center and libraries (see *below*).

### Did you know?

There are hundreds of water refill stations across campus.

#### Find a map online

<https://okanagan.mcmaster.ca/byobottle>



Bring Your Own Bottle



*Digital sign used for campaign advertisement on campus*

The Group collaborated on the creation and facilitated the approval of two Health & Safety Standard Operating Procedures. One for water quality sampling and one for water filter replacements.

New water refill stations were installed in key lacking areas as identified by students. Locations were in Bates Hall and Mary E. Keyes residences and the main dining area of Centro Eatery.

BYOB has several senior McMaster champions endorsing the initiative including the Assistant Vice-President & Chief Facilities Officer, Vice-President (Operations and Finance), and the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

In the process of this work, the Group was able to secure \$5,000 in funding through MOC's Special Project Grant to hire a sustainability student to help lead the initiative from a student perspective and provide administrative support.

### Student Experiential Learning Projects

Engaging student research has been an important value to the BYOB Working Group and has supported the Group in making data-driven decisions.

The Group supported Integrated Science student, Adrianna Diab, on her independent research project about strategies for reducing single-use water bottles. Adrianna served as a member of the Working Group and continued her



experiential learning as BYOB student-staff member. Working Group members championed and mentored her through various components, from connecting her with water quality experts, to drafting Standard Operating Procedures, and to marketing and communications.

Through the Academic Sustainability courses offered at McMaster, BYOB has also been able to work with three other student groups to provide real experience in the campus community working on sustainability issues. One student group focused on implementing engagement strategies with residence students. Another group focused on collecting quantitative data to measure the impact of the campaign. They looked at refill station usage data, single-use water bottle sales on campus, and Residence-Wide Survey data. The third group conducted a qualitative analysis of residence student perceptions on water bottle refilling.

The students received mentorship and guidance from members of the Working Group, and a connection to the BYOB governing body that would support the continuity of their work.

## Looking Forward

The BYOB campaign has seen much success over 2022 and into 2023, but the work does not end here. Now that BYOB has an established physical and digital presence through signage and the website, communication to students will continue. Work will be done to grow

the audience through social media and potential future outreach events.

The Working Group will meet to discuss a formal plan for next steps, however, consultation with the campus community on what they would like to see happen with the campaign is a priority to inform what comes next. BYOB will also continue to support student experiential learning where it can.

McMaster Hospitality Services is currently working with student researchers in McMaster's W. Booth School of Engineering Practice and Technology to explore policy options for single-use drink containers on campus. This research will conclude in April 2023 and will educate future discussions, stakeholder engagement, and strategies.

Bring Your Own Bottle hopes carry on with contributing to a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable McMaster community as it moves past its first year and looks to a bright future.

## References

1. <https://asp.mcmaster.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Ban-the-Bottle-Report-.pdf>
2. [https://asp.mcmaster.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Final-Report\\_Water-Bottle-Team.pdf](https://asp.mcmaster.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Final-Report_Water-Bottle-Team.pdf)
3. <https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/coming-to-campus-dont-forget-to-bring-your-own-water-bottle/>